Children's Daily Prayer 1999–2000

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DAILY AND WEEKLY PRAYER

FOR THE LEADER

1. **Find** the page with the correct date. Mark it with a ribbon or paper clip.
2. **Practice** the Introduction and the Closing. Check with the teacher to see if you will read and discuss the Reflection.
3. **Turn** to the Psalm. The ➧ tells you where to find it. Mark it with a ribbon or paper clip.
4. **Practice** the parts of the Psalm marked "Leader" and "Side B." If students have copies of the Psalm, you will lead them in saying the "Side B" parts. If they do not have copies, you will say the "Side B" parts alone.
5. **To begin,** start with the Introduction.

FOR THE READER

1. **Find** the page with the correct date.
2. **Practice** the Reading on that page.
3. **Practice** the Closing. You will lead the parts in **heavier print.**
4. **Turn** to the Psalm. Practice the parts marked "Side A." If students have copies of the Psalm, you will lead them in saying the "Side A" parts. If they do not have copies, you will say the "Side A" parts alone.
5. **Show** the class with your arm when to say the parts in **heavier print.**

➧ Remember: When you pray,
be peaceful, speak loudly and clearly,
and do not rush.

Children's Daily Prayer

For the School Year 1999–2000

By Elizabeth McMahon Jeep

A Liturgy of the Hours for the Classroom:
Including an Order of Prayer for Each School Day
Plus Meal and End of the Day Prayers for Each Month
That Reflect the Spirit of the Church's Seasons and Feasts

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INTRODUCTION

This book is for organizers and leaders of children's communal prayer. While it is likely that the organizer is a catechist or another adult, it is hoped that the children themselves will assume leadership during their times of prayer. This will enable them to take more responsibility for their prayer and to develop skills and a taste for the church's daily worship that can last a lifetime.

A service of prayer is provided for each day of the school year. An additional service of prayer is provided for groups that meet only once a week. Simpler prayers are offered for mealtime and for the end of the school day. The service of prayer for the day or for the week includes an introduction that briefly sketches the saint or feast of the day or some aspect of the liturgical season. Attention is also paid to the natural seasons of the year, important events in other religions, the prophets and peacemakers of our time and civil holidays that have significance for children.

This book covers a school year lasting from August 30, 1999, to June 16, 2000. For schools that remain open past June 16, on pages 334 and 335 there are many suggestions for extending prayers through the month.

On page 7 is an order of prayer for teachers preparing for the opening of school. Teachers who use this book before school begins will have no trouble helping children understand its various elements quickly. The Late Summer section closes with a prayer for faculty meetings that can be used at any time throughout the year.

This book is written both for students in religious education programs and for students in parochial schools. We encourage teachers to help students gain a strong sense of "ownership" of this book. Help them read it, use it and even invent and adapt new ways of putting it to use. We have tried to make suggestions clear and simple so that preparation time will be kept to a minimum.

In this book, Daily Prayer and Weekly Prayer focus on the feasts and seasons of the year and usually include the petitions of the classroom community. Meal Prayer focuses on our gratitude for food and other blessings, and on the needs of others. End of the Day Prayer is focused on dedication and peace.

This pattern should be adapted to serve your needs most effectively. You can, for example, use part of Daily Prayer to begin the day and the rest of it to begin religion class. For a shorter service, just the Psalm or End of the Day Prayer might be used. The blessings and other special prayers in this book can be used when appropriate. In all cases, it is best if students take the roles of Leader and Reader.

It is important that both teacher and students feel comfortable with the routine of prayer. What is printed in this book is a starting point, but if there are readings, prayer forms, special devotions or ethnic feasts that are important to your parish and school community, they certainly should be introduced. Your own creativity and preparation

will be necessary in celebrating your patron saints. You are invited to use the prayer formats found in this book, substituting appropriate psalms, songs, readings and prayers in your local celebrations.

The bibliography on page *xvi* lists the various resources used to prepare *Children's Daily Prayer.* Search here for publications that can provide further information on feasts, seasons, saints and holidays. Note in particular the book *Companion to the Calendar,* published by LTP, which contains information about every season, feast and saint of the church's year. The book was written to be useful to elementary-grade students.

In *Children's Daily Prayer,* the material in the Looking Ahead sections provides good background for those who prepare eucharistic liturgies for children. The prayers and readings in this book are not designed for use at Mass; however, the music used daily should be used at the eucharist as well.

Children's celebrations are best done within the context and themes of the church year. For example, the celebration of Halloween should have a clear relationship to the observance of All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day and the month of November. Advent customs have their own character and do not usher in the beginning of the celebration of Christmas. The week of Christmastime in early January deserves a hearty celebration. Saint Patrick can be celebrated as a "Lenten saint" who prepares us for a more robust celebration of Easter. The Paschal Triduum should be experienced as the most important festival of the year.

January of the year 2000 begins with a blessing for the opening of the Jubilee Year. Other days for which extra prayers and blessings have been supplied include Holy Cross (September 14); Archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel (September 29); Saint Francis of Assisi (October 4); Halloween, All Saints and All Souls (October 31 through November 2); Thanksgiving (November 25); the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18 to 25); the Presentation of the Lord (February 2); Saint Valentine (February 14); the Ascension of the Lord (June 1); and feasts of Our Lady. There are also rituals and blessings to mark the beginning and ending of Advent, Christmastime, Lent and Eastertime, as well as the beginning and ending of the school year.

It is possible, however, to overdo a good thing! When something is added, such as a blessing, something else may be subtracted. This is especially true if the school celebrates the eucharist regularly; you may want to eliminate or shorten other times of prayer on those days.

The Parts of This Book

As the contents pages show, this book is organized by months or seasons, with the long seasons of Lent and Eastertime each divided in

two. The 13 main sections of this book each contain five parts: an introduction called Looking Ahead; a Psalm that is used to begin Daily or Weekly Prayer; a Meal Prayer and an End of the Day Prayer that also will be used throughout the period; and finally, a series of dated pages that contain the orders of Daily and Weekly Prayer.

A selection of optional prayers is offered. A Blessing for Birthdays is printed on the inside of the back cover. There is an order for praying the rosary as a class (page 348). There are prayers for the sick (page 347), psalms suitable for days of sadness or trouble (page 346), the Litany of the Saints (page 85), an End of the Day Prayer for feasts of Mary (page 23), a blessing of gifts for people in need (page 350), a blessing of food for sharing (page 351), and a blessing of those who have celebrated a sacrament of initiation (page 282). Use these as the need arises.

Several blessings, such as that of a cross, pets, an image of Mary or an Advent wreath, are printed near the days on which they ordinarily would be celebrated during the year. An index (page 352) includes the saints and feasts celebrated this year.

Looking Ahead

Each section of this book begins with its own introduction, called Looking Ahead. These pages have three parts. About the Month or About the Season alerts the class to the mood of the month or season and the ways the church hopes sacred time will be celebrated. Preparation suggests changes in the classroom worship environment and gives direction concerning the prayers. The section titled The School of Religion provides guidance for after-school or weekend religion classes, or for other groups who gather only once a week.

The ideas in the Looking Ahead pages will need to be attended to before the season begins; they should be read to the class and discussed several days in advance.

Students — especially younger students — may need to become involved in discussion and hear explanations before they will appreciate the ideas on these pages. It is a good plan to appoint a student liturgy committee to keep up with these seasonal needs. This way, the teacher is not alone, for instance, in decorating the classroom.

Daily Prayer and Weekly Prayer

Each page of Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer has a date. The order of prayer begins with an Introduction that helps focus the children's attention. It offers a brief look at the saint or feast of the day, the season of the year or the day's scripture reading. Next, the leader is directed to turn to the Psalm for the season or the month. After the Psalm, the leader turns back to the dated page.

Next, the Reading is proclaimed, with accompanying acclamations. The Reading is always from the Bible and should be followed by a short period of silence to allow the words to settle into the hearts of the children. Allow this silence to become an important part of each gathering. Children who are able to read clearly and respectfully should be invited to serve as readers. No one, adult or child, would proclaim a scripture passage without first taking time to prepare it.

The readings in this book are taken primarily from the *Contemporary English Version* of the Bible and are suitable for the vocabulary and understanding of children.

For the sake of simplicity, all scripture passages are called "readings" rather than being divided into "readings" and "gospels." However, the appropriate liturgical acclamation is given in each case. Students may need to be taught the correct response.

Reflections for each day encourage students to make the scriptures their own. These short questions challenge children to think through some of the implications of the reading. One or more of these statements can be the foundation of a homily or a statement of faith by a teacher or student. They can be discussed by the class or reflected on in silence. In parochial schools, they can be used later in the day if Daily Prayer is used in the morning.

The Closing ends Daily Prayer and Weekly Prayer. Its form varies, but it is usually either a collect or intercessions. Intercessions are an important form of prayer both for children and for the church. When used well, intercessory prayer offers an opportunity for children to share some of their own concerns and participate more personally in the service.

The blank space in each Closing should be filled in with students' birthdays, current events and concerns, and other reasons for the class to offer prayers of thanksgiving or petition. Time should be taken at the beginning of the year for each child to write in this space on the proper day his or her baptismal anniversary, birthday or specially chosen feast day (the student's name day, perhaps). This is also the place to write the joys and crises of local, national and world events as the year progresses and as the students' awareness of these matters expands.

The leader of prayer can simply announce these intentions as something to keep in mind at prayer, for example, "Let us remember these intentions: For Heather and Roberto on their birthday. For Carl's uncle, who is sick." Or the leader can present the intentions in the form of intercessions, for example, "For Heather and Roberto on their birthday, let us pray to the Lord." All would respond: "Lord, have mercy."

Spontaneous petitions from the children can add to or substitute for those printed in the book. Rules can be made (for example, only three or five petitions each day) so that the opportunity does not become a free-for-all and ultimately counterproductive. In any case, the class should have the opportunity to formulate its own petitions.

Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer

These are usually short prayers. They change each month or each season and can be found on the pages immediately following the Psalm. These pages are available as a student prayer book, *Blessed Be God!* Students who use that book will be better able to join in the prayer responses. Students also may be able to take a copy home for use at the family meal and at bedtime. If you are not able to use *Blessed Be God!* these pages may be photocopied from *Children's Daily Prayer* and handed out.

Meal Prayer can be done in the classroom or cafeteria before the midday meal. You may want to add or substitute a song. In October, the Meal Prayer is the traditional noontime Angelus, and during May, the *Regina Caeli.*

End of the Day Prayer also might include a song. Sometimes there is a trinitarian blessing at its conclusion. The leader of prayer will need to learn how to hold out an arm in blessing, and the class may need to learn to make the sign of the cross in response.

The Ways We Pray

Acclamations are short statements of faith and devotion used at regular times. They are often in the form of a dialogue between the leader and the class, and students should be encouraged to memorize them. These short statements often carry the mood of the liturgical season. Most of them can be sung, even on a single note, and should be sung if at all possible.

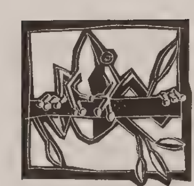
Silence is sometimes called for, especially after hearing the scriptures. Begin with a period of time the children find comfortable (such as half a minute) and gradually lengthen it. The silence should be preceded by something the children can reflect on.

Ritual and gesture are important aspects of Catholic prayer, along with a sense of the sacramental value of physical objects. This book suggests various gestures, ritual items and decorations for the seasons.
There are no directions to stand or sit during various parts of the prayers; this is a matter for the teacher and class to decide as they become comfortable with this book. However, it is traditional to stand for prayer. We sit to sing the psalms and to listen to scripture readings (except the gospel, for which we stand). These traditions suggest that most prayer be done standing, especially during the closing of Daily or Weekly Prayer.

Ministers of prayer guide us through Daily or Weekly Prayer, which requires at least two ministers, the leader and reader (although more than that can be accommodated).

It is the role of the leader to find and mark the correct pages, give the signal to begin, set the pace and make sure that the other ministers know when to take their parts. The leader also leads the "Side B" parts of the Psalm.

The chief duty of the reader is to proclaim the scripture, so he or she must prepare in advance in order to read well. That person also leads the "Side A" parts of the Psalm and the congregational parts of the Closing.



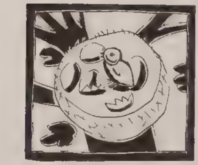
Being a good leader or reader takes practice and talent. Rather than changing ministerial roles daily, it's better to change weekly so that ministers become familiar with this book.

Instructions for the leader and reader are printed on the inside of the front cover. Most Meal and End of the Day Prayers can be handled by one minister, but it is advisable to have a second person lead the responses, especially if students do not have copies of the prayers.

Training of ministers should be unthreatening. At the beginning of the year, everyone will need practice; occasional reminders should be sufficient after that. Here are three rules of "liturgical behavior":

1) *Stand up straight.* It gives prayer the dignity it deserves and establishes your ministerial role.
2) *Slow everything down.* Walk slowly to the lectern; read slowly; light the candle slowly.
3) *Exaggerate everything a bit.* Read more loudly (or sometimes more softly) than usual; bow more deeply; bless with your arm stretched out as far as it will go.

Scripture Readings



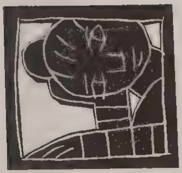
Readings included in Weekly Prayer are based on the Sunday liturgy and are usually taken from the gospel. The use of these readings during the week or on Saturday mornings will help the children prepare or reflect on the parish's Sunday worship.

During the fall, the church follows the readings of Year A, which present key teachings of Jesus from Matthew's gospel. With Advent and Christmastime, we begin Year B with readings that emphasize the figures of Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary. During winter, readings from Mark lead us through the public ministry of Jesus. During Lent, the readings prepare students for participating in the Paschal Triduum (the three-day celebration of Easter: Holy Thursday evening through Easter Sunday evening). The readings of Eastertime are taken from John's gospel and touch on the saving work of Jesus. In June, we return to the Sunday gospels of Ordinary Time.

Readings included in Daily Prayer have been chosen for a variety of reasons. Some have been chosen for their relevance to a particular feast or occasion, but most reflect a desire to introduce children to the figures, stories, books and themes of the Bible. Long narratives are spread out over the course of a week or more so that each passage is short enough for children to grasp and discuss. It is hoped that over several years the children will develop a familiarity with scripture and a delight in its rich variety.

September's readings are taken from the Gospel of Matthew to echo the Sunday gospels of Year A, the current lectionary year.

The book of Genesis provides the readings for October. The second story of Creation is followed by stories that outline the spread of sin: the fall of humankind, and Abel's death at the hands of his brother.



The figures of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Joseph have been presented in some depth over the course of the last two years. This year Abraham, Sarah and Isaac are briefly introduced and their relationship to Hagar and Ishmael is presented. In November, we read from the book of Exodus, telling the story of the birth and vocation of Moses, the struggle with Pharaoh, the events of the Passover, and the years in the desert.

Advent introduces readings from the prophet Isaiah that describe a savior whom God will send. These readings prepare the children for the celebration of Christmas in their homes and parishes. The readings of Christmastime focus on the meaning of a jubilee year.

During the winter days of January and February, we learn of the Babylonian exile through readings taken from the book of Daniel. With additional readings from the prophets, we learn how the exile of the people of Israel shaped their expectations of a Messiah. The season of Ordinary Time is longer than usual this year, and so the children have a chance to meet some prophets they have not heard from before.

During Lent we focus on the gospel of Mark, the key to this lectionary year. The readings trace the public ministry of Jesus and follow the events that take him to Jerusalem. Mark's version of the Last Supper prepares the children for the celebration of the Triduum.

The readings of the first weeks of Eastertime focus on the post-resurrection appearances and teachings of Jesus. Later in May, we read of Nicodemus and of other teachings that shed light on the "Easter sacraments" (baptism, confirmation and eucharist). Many of these readings are taken from the gospel of John.

After Pentecost, the school year draws to a speedy close with readings from the prophet Isaiah.

Music

As Saint Augustine wrote, to sing one's prayer is to "pray twice." Hymns for each month or season are suggested on the Looking Ahead pages. A hymn can be sung in Daily or Weekly Prayer before the opening Psalm or after the Closing, or as an alternative to reciting the Psalm. Hymns also can be sung at other times of the day (for example, at the conclusion of the End of the Day Prayer).

The hymns have been chosen from GIA/LTP's *Hymnal for Catholic Students.* The songs and psalms in this hymnal were selected as standard repertoire for Christians. Tapes of the songs are available as a teaching aid. If another hymnal or other musical resources will be used at prayer, select from it pieces that are similar in mood and spirit to the ones suggested here. Choose music you believe will still be sung by the church when the students have become adults.

Many of the acclamations and repeated elements in this book, such as the Lord's Prayer and the litanies, can be sung. Schools and parishes with the musical resources may want to replace the recitation of the psalms with sung psalmody, either in the responsorial style used at Mass or in metrical hymn settings.

Don't be afraid of repetition in music. Using the same hymn for several weeks increases the likelihood that the children will learn it by heart and will appropriate it as genuine prayer. The melodies used for the acclamations can stay the same all year. That is how churches known for strong congregational singing do it; they do not change the music all the time. Instead, they gradually introduce the people to good, solid songs—songs to last a lifetime.

Children's Daily Prayer can be used well without any singing, but that is not the most desirable plan. Sung prayer is at the heart of the Christian tradition. Your efforts will be well rewarded if you integrate Daily or Weekly Prayer with the music program of the school or with the music ministry of the parish.

Active Participation

In many schools, prayer is led over the public-address system. While this may be practical for a number of reasons and in a few cases may even be necessary, it is probably not the best way to lead children in prayer. In its essence, common prayer is supposed to be an encounter between the assembly and God. This immediacy is hardly reinforced when prayer is guided by a disembodied voice.

In addition, "long-distance leadership" may not permit the adjustment of the prayers to the age or to the special needs of each class. Spontaneous intercessions, birthday blessings, the lighting of a wreath and the singing of hymns are all aspects of prayer that build up a class into a worshiping community. Prayer leadership exercised over the public address system may short-circuit this development.

Young people should become skillful and comfortable with proclaiming scripture, offering intercessions and blessings, and taking a leadership role among their peers. In many parishes, children see, Sunday after Sunday, a form of worship seemingly "owned" by the priest. Authority over prayer can seem to belong to one person whose distance from the community is underscored by distinctive vesture and seating.

Certainly, contemporary Catholic theology strives to correct this impression, but young children do not know theology. They know what they experience. It is likely that the experience of small groups at prayer, at home and in the classroom, will teach them as no book can that communal prayer is the joy and obligation of every believer.

Prayer in the classroom also can give students firsthand experience of the different roles of communal prayer. The foremost role, the role that is the duty and right of every baptized person, is to be an active member of the assembly. This book has been written for that purpose.

Student Copies of the Prayers

If possible, give all the children copies of the Psalm. Parochial school students will find it useful to have copies of all three seasonal pages: the Psalm, the Meal Prayer and the End of the Day Prayer. These pages are included in *Blessed Be God!* a student prayer book that is a companion to *Children's Daily Prayer.* These books are inexpensive and can easily be kept in desks or in the prayer center.

For teachers who prefer to make copies of individual pages as the year goes on, reminders are included in *Children's Daily Prayer* a few days before each change of season or month. Duplicated pages can be kept in desks or in religion folders during the season. Keep extra copies on hand.

When copying the Psalm or other prayers, you might wish to mask the page number and any instructions on the page such as "turn back to Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer for today" that are meant only for the leader of prayer.

As a purchaser of this book, you are allowed to duplicate only the Psalms, Meal Prayers and End of the Day Prayers; these copies may be used only with your class or group. You may not duplicate the Psalms or Prayers unless you are using them with this book. Other parts of this book may not be duplicated without the permission of Liturgy Training Publications and/or the copyright holders listed on the acknowledgments page.

Scheduling Weekly Prayer

Students who meet only once a week need a consistent format for prayer so that they know what to expect and how to participate. Catechists should plan from the beginning for students to take the roles of leader and reader. Rely on the students' help in carrying out the schedule of prayers and blessings.

This book offers a Weekly Prayer for each week from September 12 to June 18 which, with a few exceptions, is based on one of the readings of the Mass of the Sunday. You can choose to anticipate the Sunday coming or reflect on the Sunday past. However, on important feast days, instead of using Weekly Prayer, it might be better to use that feast's Daily Prayer or a feast day blessing.

Plan ahead! Early in the year, create a schedule that accommodates the church's seasons and feasts. With this in mind, a November prayer schedule for Wednesday evening classes might look like this:

DATE	PRAYER	LEADER	READER	NOTES
Nov. 3	Weekly Prayer, p. 89	Erica	Valerie	■ Handout: A Prayer for the Dead, p. 86, for use at home
Nov. 10	Weekly Prayer, p. 95	Valerie	Andy	
Nov. 17	Weekly Prayer, p. 101	Andy	Lupe	■ bless Thanksgiving donations, p. 350
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Prayer, p. 108	Lupe	Ben	

Prayers or blessings that might take the place of Weekly Prayer:

On holy days of obligation, many religious education programs schedule the eucharist, and some may cancel classes. Be sure to schedule a celebration for the patronal feast day of your church.

15 *A Blessing of the School Year*
22 September 8, Birth of Mary
23 *End of the Day Prayer on Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
28 September 14, Holy Cross
29 *A Blessing of the Cross*
35 September 21, St. Matthew
42 September 29, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael
43 *A Blessing of Flower Bulbs*
54 *A Blessing of Pets*
57 October 7, Our Lady of the Rosary
64 October 15, St. Teresa of Jesus
66 October 18, St. Luke
75 October 28, SS. Simon and Jude
78 *A Blessing for Halloween*
85 *Litany of the Saints*
87 November 1, All Saints' Day
86 *A Prayer for the Dead*
88 November 2, All Souls' Day
94 November 9, Dedication of Lateran Basilica
108 *A Prayer for Thanksgiving*
350 *A Blessing of Gifts*
115 *A Blessing of the Advent Wreath*
118 November 30, St. Andrew
120 December 2, four women martyrs of El Salvador
121 December 3, St. Francis Xavier
125 December 8, Immaculate Conception
126 *End of the Day Prayer for the Immaculate Conception*
133 December 16, Las Posadas
140 *A Blessing before Christmas Break*
147 *A Blessing of the Stable*
148 *A Prayer for a Time of Jubilee*
170 January 17, Martin Luther King
171 January 18 – 25, *Prayer for the Week of Christian Unity*
177 January 25, Conversion of Paul
190 February 2, Presentation of the Lord
191 *A Blessing of Candles*
192 February 3, St. Blase
202 *A Blessing for St. Valentine's Day*
209 February 22, Chair of Peter
221 March 7, Carnival/Mardi Gras
222 *Farewell to the Alleluia*
229 *The Preparation of Ashes*
230 March 8, Ash Wednesday
240 March 20, St. Joseph
274 *A Blessing before Easter Break*
281 *Welcoming the Alleluia*
282 *A Blessing after Initiation*
283 *A Blessing of an Image of Mary*
284 – 289 April 23 – 30, the days of Easter Week
292 May 3, SS. Philip and James
322 June 1, Ascension of the Lord
323 *End of the Day Prayer for Ascension Day*
332 *A Blessing before Summer Vacation*

Dear Students and Teachers,

Have a wonderful year!
May God's love follow you every day.
We would like to hear from you.
Tell us how you liked this book,
and give us suggestions for next year.
This is my address:

Elizabeth McMahon Jeep
Liturgy Training Publications
1800 North Hermitage Avenue
Chicago, IL 60622-1101

Thank you,

Elizabeth McMahon Jeep
Elizabeth McMahon Jeep

Reference Bibliography

The publications listed here were useful in the preparation of *Children's Daily Prayer.*

Ritual Books, Prayer Texts and Other Liturgical Resources:

Book of Blessings. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1988.

The Book of Common Prayer. New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979.

Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers. Publishing Service, United States Catholic Conference, 1986. Every home (and classroom) should have a copy!

Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours (Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Night Prayer). ICEL. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1976.

Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975.

Lectionary for Masses with Children. Sunday volumes for Years A, B and C, and a volume for weekdays. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1993.

General Information:

All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time. Robert Ellsberg. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1998.

Butler's Lives of the Saints, New Full Edition. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997 and continuing.

Celebrating the Church Year with Young Children. Joan Halmo. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1988.

Chase's Annual Events: Special Days, Weeks and Months. Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc., annual.

"The Christmas Cycle," *Liturgy,* volume 9, number 3. Washington, DC: The Liturgical Conference, 1991.

The Folklore of World Holidays. Margaret Read McDonald, ed. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1992.

A Guide to the Saints. Kristin E. White. New York: Ivy Books, 1991.

"Liturgy: The Calendar," *Liturgy,* volume 1, number 2. Washington, DC: The Liturgical Conference, 1980.

"Liturgy: Rhythms of Prayer," *Liturgy,* volume 8, number 4. Washington, DC: The Liturgical Conference, 1990.

Modern Saints: Their Lives and Faces. Ann Ball. Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1983.

The Oxford Dictionary of Saints, fourth edition. David Hugh Farmer. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

A Pilgrim's Almanac. Edward Hays. Leavenworth, KS: Forest of Peace Books, Inc., 1989.

LTP Materials Useful to Teachers:

At Home with the Word. Annual. Sunday scriptures with discussion and ideas for living as a Christian.

Bible Stories for the Forty Days. Melissa Musick Nussbaum. 1997. Stories bring to life characters from both testaments whom we all should know.

Blessed Be God! Elizabeth McMahon Jeep. 1994. A companion to *Children's Daily Prayer* prepared for students (and their families), with the Psalms, Meal Prayers and End of the Day Prayers for each month or season.

Children in the Assembly of the Church. Eleanor Bernstein, CSJ, and John Brooks-Leonard, eds. 1993. Essays about liturgy with children.

Children, Liturgy and the Word. A 26-minute video focusing on ways to celebrate children's liturgy of the word.

Children's Prayer Folders. Hold the seasonal prayer sheets handed out from *Children's Daily Prayer,* as well as any other important papers from your religious education program.

Companion to the Calendar. Mary Ellen Hynes. 1993. Information about every season and day of the Christian year.

Fling Wide the Doors! 1992. An Advent calendar that runs till Epiphany. Large and small versions.

Forty Days and Forty Nights. 1995. A Lenten calendar with doors to open from Ash Wednesday until Easter.

A Guide to the Lectionary for Masses with Children. Peter Mazar and Robert Piercy. 1994. Includes suggestions for weekday Masses during the school year.

Paschal Mission. An annual series of weekly handouts for Lent, Triduum and Eastertime.

Preparing Liturgy for Children and Children for Liturgy. Gabe Huck, *et.al.* 1989. Valuable guide for those who work with children and worship.

The Religious Potential of the Child. Sofia Cavalletti. 1992. A classic book.

Sunday Morning Video. Introduce your early elementary students to Sunday worship with this colorful video.

Take Me Home: Notes on the Church Year for Children. Christine Kenny-Sheputis. 1991. Useful weekly reproducible take-home notes.

Take Me Home, Too. Peter Mazar. 1997. New handouts for seasons and feasts.

Teacher's Guide to Children's Daily Prayer. An audiocassette narrated by Elizabeth Jeep outlining the purpose, value and intent of *Children's Daily Prayer.*

Teaching Christian Children about Judaism. Deborah Levine. 1995.

The Welcome Table: Planning Masses with Children. Elizabeth McMahon Jeep, ed. 1982. Essays for liturgists and catechists.

Welcome, Yule! An annual series of weekly handouts for Advent and Christmastime. Poster available.

Winter Saints. Melissa Musick Nussbaum. 1998. Stories of the special characters who inhabit our winter calendar.

The Year of Grace: A Liturgical Calendar. Annual. Poster size (26" square!) and notebook size.

LATE SUMMER

ORDINARY TIME LATE SUMMER 1999

■ ABOUT THE SEASON

LOOKING AHEAD

While it may seem as if the rest of the world is enjoying the beach or the pool, you will be unpacking books, decorating bulletin boards and airing out classrooms. For teachers, principals and directors of religious education, late summer is a time of high expectations, hard work, good resolutions and perhaps a little bit of anxiety. What will the children be like? Will they like me? Is the faculty going to work well together? Am I going to have a good year?

Volunteer catechists face the same tension and excitement. There are many changes in personnel and programs from one year to the next. Are the teachers' meetings and workshops going to be worthwhile? How will teaching interfere with my other obligations? Should I have agreed to teach this year?

These thoughts visit neophytes and veterans alike, yet that is not the real theme of these weeks. The strongest feeling is one of excitement. It is what keeps teachers coming back year after year. You are starting fresh, with new books, new skills and new ideas. Few professions offer a long summer in which to regenerate one's energy and enthusiasm, followed by a "New Year's Day" in late August or early September.

▪ SOON THERE WILL BE AN ANXIOUS GROUP OF STUDENTS BUBBLING AND TUMBLING OVER YOUR DOORSTEP, bringing youth, enthusiasm, excitement and curiosity. They will look for your smile of welcome. They will see the way you have made the room a place of warmth and hospitality. Desks will shine, windows will sparkle, and neatly lettered name tags will greet new owners of hooks or lockers. The children will notice things you have brought in to mitigate the "institutional" look: a colorful fabric or Navajo rug hung on the wall, shells brought back from summer days at the beach, a kite for recess on a windy day.

▪ AS PART OF YOUR HOUSEKEEPING, YOU WILL WANT TO CREATE A FOCAL POINT FOR CLASSROOM PRAYER. It might be a table or bookshelf set aside as a "prayer corner" where the Bible, this prayer book and other signs of prayer are placed. These might include a candle, a bowl of water, a cross, an image of Mary or an image of the parish's patron.

Some signs will change with the seasons of nature, with the shifting concerns of the children and with the feasts and seasons of the church's calendar. You might begin with the tokens of late summer, such as a glorious sunflower. Religious images, such as a feast day icon or a picture of a saint, might also change throughout the year to help bring the children's attention to the cycle of the church's prayer.

Teachers of day school and teachers of the after-school programs who share the same rooms will have to spend time getting acquainted and discussing some of the housekeeping details that affect prayer. How will after-school students be made to feel at home? Will they be able to bring things to the prayer corner?

Anyone who works with children on a daily basis is wise enough to expect the unexpected. The systems you plan and the programs and regulations you ordain may not last a month. A teacher, after all, can only organize and focus but can never fully control what happens in the classroom. Flexibility is what keeps teachers young.

▪ IT IS APPROPRIATE TO TURN THE LAST WEEKS OF AUGUST INTO A TIME OF PRAYER AS WELL AS PREPARATION. This is your opportunity to proclaim a new year and to set priorities as well as lesson plans in order.

■ PREPARATION FOR LATE SUMMER

On the following pages, you will find a Daily Prayer to use during the days before the school year begins. This prayer is for teachers. Prayers for the students

begin with the Monday before Labor Day. The introduction to the book and this section for Late Summer are the only parts of this book that have not been prepared for use by students.

On page *xvi* is a bibliography of publications used to prepare *Children's Daily Prayer.* You can use these resources to locate further information about holidays, saints and the liturgical seasons.

▪ ASIDE FROM THE OBVIOUS VALUE OF OPENING AND CLOSING THE DAYS OF CLASSROOM PREPARATION WITH WORSHIP, using this book during August, either alone or as a faculty, will familiarize you with its format. Once school starts, you will be better able to introduce it to the children and then turn the leadership of daily prayer over to them.

The prayers for Late Summer are different from the prayers for the other times of the year. This section contains only a single page for Daily Prayer to be used as often as needed.

▪ TO LEARN THE FORMAT FOR PRAYER, PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS PRINTED ON THE INSIDE OF THE FRONT COVER. Adapt them as necessary if you will be praying alone. It is suggested that you read the name of each child on your class list as the Closing of Daily Prayer for Late Summer, so you will need that list each day. If you are praying with other faculty members, all should read their students' names in silence. If you are alone, you may read your students' names aloud.

▪ SUGGESTED HYMNS: Throughout the year, you can sing a hymn to begin Daily or Weekly Prayer. You can also substitute a hymn for the Psalm or sing a hymn to conclude the End of the Day Prayer. In any way you can, try to make song a part of prayer.

"This day God gives me" (page 4 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) is a good choice for this time of year. Based on the Lorica of Saint Patrick, it is set to the popular Irish melody "Bunessan," better known as "Morning has broken." Keep this song in the file for March 17.

■ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

There are no Weekly Prayers for the month of August. These begin in September, when religious education classes usually begin.

Please notice, however, that the Weekly Prayers are dated according to the Sundays of the year. The reading for each Weekly Prayer is from one of the Sunday readings, most often the gospel. Some classes may choose to anticipate the Sunday, and others may choose to reflect on the Sunday past.

Volunteer catechists who use this book for their own prayer during the weeks before classes begin will be in a good position to decide how best to use it with their students. It may be that the entire school of religion will use the Weekly Prayer before separating for instruction. In that case, the End of the Day Prayer and a hymn can be used in the classrooms before dismissal.

If the students come immediately to their classrooms, you might begin with a hymn and close with Weekly Prayer. You might prefer to begin with part of the Weekly Prayer (the Introduction and Psalm perhaps) and use the rest of it before dismissal. Once some of these decisions are made, look at page *xiv* for further help in scheduling prayer for the year.

May God bless your preparations and make your classroom, school and parish places of peace, safety, creativity and growth for everyone this year!

A PSALM FOR LATE SUMMER

Psalm 95:1 – 2, 4 –

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Lord, open my lips.
ALL **And my mouth will proclaim your praise.**
LEADER Come, sing with joy to God,
shout to our savior, our rock.
ALL **Enter God's presence with praise,**
enter with shouting and song.
SIDE A God cradles the depths of the earth,
holds fast the mountain peaks.
SIDE B God shaped the ocean and owns it,
formed the earth by hand.
SIDE A Come, bow down and worship,
kneel to the Lord our maker.
SIDE B This is our God, our shepherd,
we are the flock led with care.
LEADER Come, sing with joy to God,
shout to our savior, our rock.
ALL **Enter God's presence with praise,**
enter with shouting and song.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

▶ turn to
Daily Prayer
on page 7

LATE SUMMER

MEAL PRAYER

MATH
SPANISH
1
KATIE

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER All the world hopes in you, O Lord,
that you will give us food in our hunger.

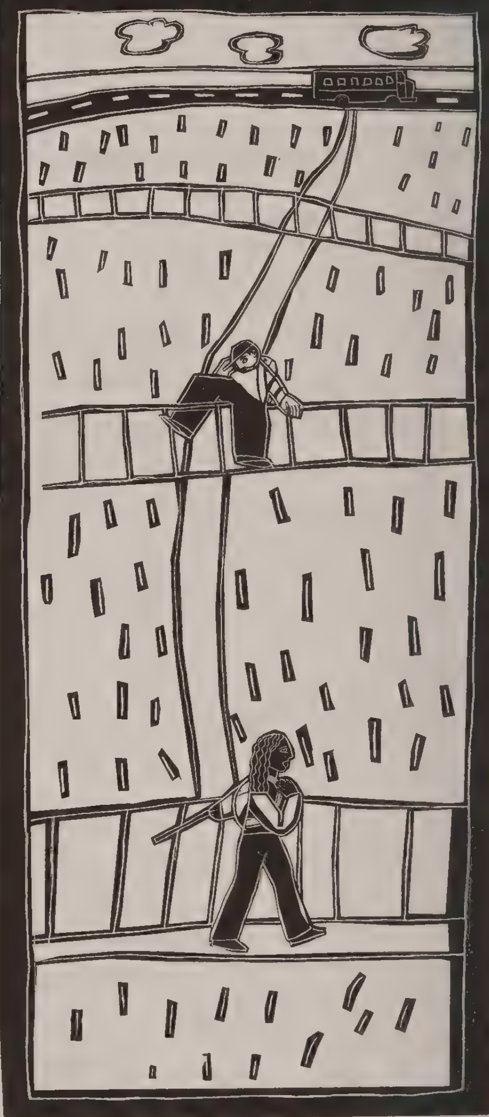
ALL **You open wide your hand**
and we are filled with good things.

Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts
which we are about to receive
from your bounty.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LATE SUMMER

END OF THE DAY PRAYER



▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER God, come to my assistance.

ALL **Lord, make haste to help me.**

▶ the following words
can be sung to the melody for
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow":

ALL **Lord, bless the work that I have done,**
and bless the evening still to come.
Let my return a blessing be
to all who share a home with me.

Give us with food and rest and play
a fitting end to this good day.
From webs of sin grant us release,
and touch our planet with your peace.

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

ALL **Amen.**

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

DAILY PRAYER

Before the School Year Begins

Reminder: This prayer is for teachers; you will need the class list. Student-oriented prayers begin with Monday, August 30.

INTRODUCTION

Reflect on some of the memorable teachers in your life. What qualities did they share? Who showed you what it means to be dedicated to exploration and learning? Who showed you that you matter? Who listened to your ideas?

Saint Paul, like us, was both a catechist and a model for his hearers. The reading today carries a message from Paul to each catechist.

A PSALM FOR LATE SUMMER

turn to
page 4

READING

I Thessalonians 5:10 – 11, 16 – 18, 23 – 24

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Christ died for us, so that we could live with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes. That's why you must encourage and help each other, just as you are already doing.

Always be joyful and never stop praying. Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ. This is what God wants you to do. I pray that God, who gives peace, will make you completely holy. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless until our Lord Jesus Christ returns. The one who chose you can be trusted, and he will do this.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Is my theology and my catechesis solidly focused on salvation in Christ? What steps can I take this year to nourish my faith and my understanding of the gospel?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

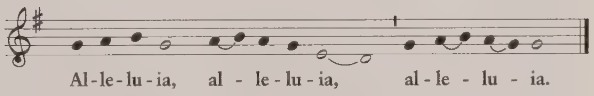
Loving and welcoming God,
  look with steadfast love on the students
  who will soon gather here.
Bless each of us for whom Christ died
  and in whom Christ lives:

read the name
of each child
on your class list

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



A Prayer for Meetings

At any time of the year, parts or all of the day's prayer may be used to begin and conclude a faculty meeting or a parent meeting. The following is an alternative.

Everyone will need a copy of the psalm for the season or month. Provide a candle or an Advent wreath when appropriate.

To Begin the Meeting

LEADER AND ALL

▶ pray the psalm
for the season or month

READER Ephesians 2:20 – 22

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

You are like a building with the apostles and prophets as the foundation and with Christ as the most important stone. Christ is the one who holds the building together and makes it grow into a holy temple for the Lord. And you are part of that building Christ has built as a place for God's own Spirit to live.

The word of the Lord.

▶ keep silence
for a minute or two

LEADER

Holy Spirit of God,
you call us together as one
to bring to children
the message of your love.
Be with us in this gathering.
We ask this in Jesus' name.

ALL **Amen.**

At the Close of the Meeting

Ephesians 3:20–21

LEADER

Let us remember these intentions:

To you, God,
who by the power at work in us
can do far more than we dare ask or imagine,
to you be glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus to all generations,
now and for ever.

ALL **Amen.**

▶ hold one hand out
in blessing
over those gathered, and say:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, now and for ever.

ALL **Amen.**

SEPTEMBER

Monday, August 30, to Thursday, September 30

ORDINARY TIME
SEPTEMBER 1999

■ ABOUT THE MONTH

Autumn is the longest school season. In many ways it is the best season, too. It begins with the last hot days of summer and ends with the chilly days at Thanksgiving.

LOOKING AHEAD

For the first few weeks of school, you may be tense and excited. You may even feel as if you cannot remember anything you learned last year. But don't worry. Soon you will be back in the swing of things.

All over the country, teachers, principals, directors of religious education, librarians, custodians and others have been getting ready for students just like you. Many people have been busy making this school beautiful. Have you noticed things around the school that have been done to make you happy to be here?

Are there new things in the building? Are there new teachers? new students? It is a good bet that you have some new things for school, too. Who made sure that you got those new things? Who made sure you were ready for school on time? There are many people who love you. They have worked hard so that you and your friends have a good school year. Those people deserve your thanks.

▪ SOMEONE ELSE DESERVES YOUR THANKS. God has provided the wonderful month of September for all of us. The weather is good. The land is beautiful. It is also a good month for friendship. You can meet the new people at school and make them feel welcome. You can talk to the ones you did not see all summer. Because you are older than you were last year, you can do this more easily.

You are in a higher grade too, so you will learn new things. There are many things you can do now that you could not do before. It is good to give God thanks and praise for all the love poured out on us and for all the good days to come.

▪ THIS BOOK IS A GUIDE FOR YOUR PRAYER. Some of the prayers change each day. Some stay the same. This is the way the church prays.

▪ DIRECTIONS FOR USING THIS BOOK FOR PRAYER ARE PRINTED ON THE INSIDE OF THE FRONT COVER. When it is your turn to lead the prayer, you can read those instructions again. It is a good idea to attach ribbons to the book and to use them to mark your place. You may want to hang bells or other ornaments from the ends of the ribbons. Or, instead of ribbons, you can mark your place with paper clips.

▪ GOD CREATED YOU, AND GOD LOVES YOU. So let your thoughts and feelings rise to God in prayer. Let this year of grace be the best school year ever. And let September, like everything you do, begin and end with praise and thanksgiving.

■ PREPARATION FOR SEPTEMBER

On September 3 we remember Pope Gregory the Great. Throughout autumn, we will sing a Gregorian chant "alleluia" at prayer. Gregorian chant is named after Pope Gregory. We will try to sing our prayer often this year.

▪ PLEASE LEARN THE CORRECT RESPONSES TO THE READINGS. After a reading from a gospel, the reader says, "The gospel of the Lord." Everyone replies, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." But if the reading is not from Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, the reader says, "The word of the Lord," and we answer, "Thanks be to God."

▪ DAILY AND WEEKLY PRAYERS HAVE A BLANK SPACE FOR YOU TO WRITE INTENTIONS. Intentions are things to pray about. For example, "For Lucia's grandmother, who is sick," "For Jonathan on his birthday," and "For people hurt in the earthquake."

During the first week of class, teachers and students should fill in their baptismal anniversaries or birthdays in the blank spaces on the correct pages of this book. That way we will remember to pray for them on those days. Religious education students should mark their special days in the blank space of the Weekly Prayer pages. Remember that these pages represent an entire week or more. If your special day falls on a weekend or during a vacation, select another day for yourself, such as your saint's feast day.

Other happy or sad things that happen, such as the birth of a new brother or sister, the parish feast day, or the sickness of a grandparent, should be added to the list of intentions as the year goes on.

▪ A BLESSING TO USE ON BIRTHDAYS IS ON THE INSIDE OF THE BACK COVER. It can be used at the end of Daily or Weekly Prayer or at some other time.

▪ THREE SPECIAL BLESSINGS CAN BE USED DURING SEPTEMBER. The first is a blessing of the school year, on page 15. This can be used during the first week of school or at the first gathering of the school of religion.

The second is a blessing of the cross. On the feast of the Holy Cross, September 14, or on a day near the feast, we can bless the classroom crucifix and crosses brought from home. This blessing is on page 29.

The third is a blessing of flower bulbs for planting. This is a traditional way of observing the feast of the angels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, on September 29, or the feast of the Guardian Angels, on October 2. This blessing is on page 43.

▪ SUGGESTED HYMNS: "Let all things now living" (page 150 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) has a beautiful Welsh tune. The word "Welsh" means "from Wales." The Welsh people are famous for their melodies. Another song that seems to go with Labor Day and the start of a new school year is "God, who stretched the spangled heavens" (page 130 in the hymnal). These words are set to an American tune that can be sung as a round.

"Lift high the cross" (page 154 in the hymnal) is worth learning in honor of the feast of the Holy Cross (September 14).

■ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

You will find that the Weekly Prayers help you prepare for the Sunday Eucharist. The readings come from the Masses of the twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth Sundays in Ordinary Time.

▪ SEPTEMBER 19 IS CATECHETICAL SUNDAY. In many parishes, teachers receive a blessing on that Sunday. The theme for that day's celebration is "God our Father, God of Love." Be sure to greet your teachers and pray for them on that day.

If you meet on weekdays, you might want to use that day's Daily Prayer instead of the Weekly Prayer, especially if you will be meeting on a feast day.

SCHOOL BUS
SCHOOL BUS
SCHOOL BUS

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

Psalm 145:1–2, 8–9, 13–14, 17–18

LEADER	Great is the Lord, highly to be praised.
ALL	**Age to age proclaims your works.**
SIDE A	I will exalt you, God my king, for ever bless your name. I will bless you every day, for ever praise your name.
SIDE B	Gracious and merciful is the Lord, slow to anger, full of love. The Lord is good in every way, merciful to every creature.
SIDE A	The Lord is faithful in every word and gracious in every work. The Lord supports the fallen, raises those bowed down.
SIDE B	The Lord is just in every way, loving in every deed. The Lord is near to those who call, who cry out from their hearts.
LEADER	Great is the Lord, highly to be praised.
ALL	**Age to age proclaims your works.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

➧ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

SEPTEMBER

MEAL PRAYER

MATH
SPANISH 1
KATIE

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER Loving God,
you set a table before us
and fill it with good things.
Teach us to share what we have
so that no one who comes to eat
finds an empty table.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL **Amen.**

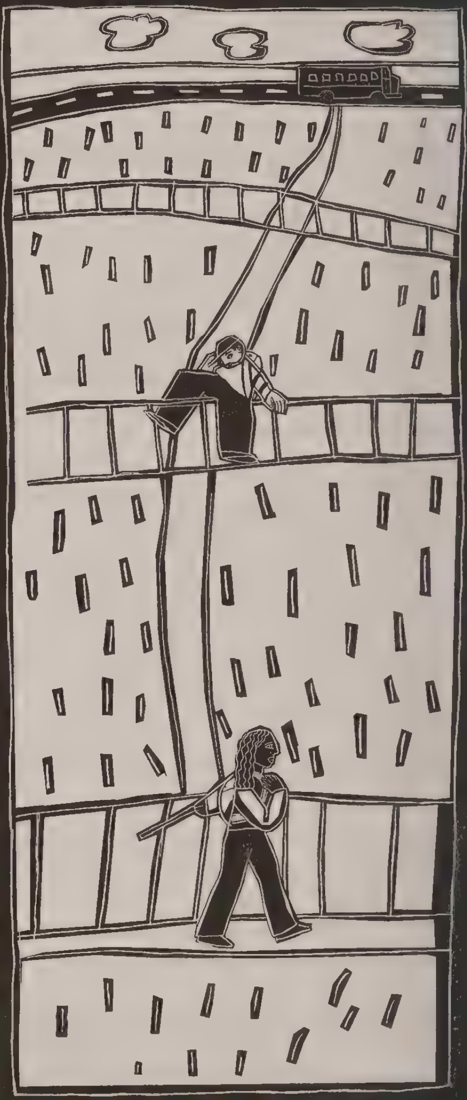
LEADER For the food we are about to eat
and for the life that it nourishes,
let us offer thanks to God:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SEPTEMBER

END OF THE DAY PRAYER



ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER Be our shining light, O Lord,
during the rest of this day
and all through the night.
Show us the good that surrounds us
so that we might praise you.
Protect us from all dangers
that we might give you thanks
through Jesus,
who is Lord for ever and ever.
ALL **Amen.**

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Blessing of the School Year

Bring apples, grapes or other fruit, just enough to be cut up and shared. Bring a basket, knife or other equipment to help share the fruit. Begin and end with a simple song, such as "Taste and see" in the Hymnal for Catholic Students, *page 59.*

LEADER
Let us begin this year as we begin each day,
by signing ourselves with the cross of Jesus.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Psalm 34:2 – 3, 6, 9

Let us all say:
I will praise your name for ever:
My Lord and my God!

ALL
I will praise your name for ever:
My Lord and my God!

LEADER
I will never stop thanking God,
with constant words of praise.
My soul will boast of God;
the poor will hear me and be glad.

Turn to God, be bright with joy;
you shall never be let down.
Drink in the richness of God,
enjoy the strength of the Lord.

Let us all say:
I will praise your name for ever:
My Lord and my God!

ALL
I will praise your name for ever:
My Lord and my God!

LEADER
It is good to begin our season of study
in the autumn,
when farmers are bringing in
their harvest of good things to eat.

▶ hold up the fruit,
and say:

Just as the work of the farmer
has produced this fruit,
so our work in this class will bring us
the nourishment of God's word.

▶ extend a hand
over the fruit,
and say:

God our Creator,
you provide food for our bodies,
ideas for our minds,
and your love for our hearts.
Bless this fruit that we share
as a symbol of the time and friendship
we will share during the coming school year.
Be with us now and for ever.

ALL
Amen.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

▶ pass the fruit
among the group

MONDAY PRAYER

August 30, 1999

Reminder: September's Psalm, Meal and End of the Day Prayers are on pages 6 to 8 of *Blessed Be God!* Pray the Blessing of the School Year, on page 15, sometime this week.

INTRODUCTION

As we begin a new school year, we learn again how to pray well together. When we pray, we pay attention to God, who is here with us. We listen to God's word, and share with God our thoughts, hopes and fears. We begin prayer by trying to become still and ready, so that what we say comes from the heart.

The reading today tells how Elijah *(ee-LYE-juh)* made himself ready. He listened for the voice of God, and it came, not in loud thunder but in silence.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

I Kings 19:11–13

Listen to the words of the first book of Kings:

While Elijah *(ee-LYE-juh)* was on Mount Sinai *(SYE-nye),* the LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain. I want you to see me when I pass by."

All at once, a strong wind shook the mountain and shattered the rocks. But the LORD was not in the wind. Next, there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. Then there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. Finally, there was a gentle breeze, and when Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his coat. He went out and stood at the entrance to the cave.

The LORD asked, "Elijah, why are you here?"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

As we stand at the beginning of the year, God asks: "Why are you here?" What are our plans? What do we want to happen? How are we going to help make this year good for others?

CLOSING

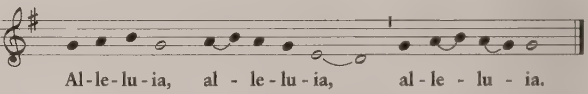
Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

Loving God, you give us this new school year
and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray and work
and learn together.
And grant a happy year to all the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



TUESDAY PRAYER

August 31, 1999

INTRODUCTION

When we gather to pray this year, we will listen to a reading of God's word from the Bible. During September, many of our readings will come from the gospel according to Matthew.

When the reader ends with the words, "The gospel of the Lord," we always answer, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." Then we spend a few minutes in silence, letting the words of the gospel echo in our hearts.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 7:7–11

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And the door will be opened for everyone who knocks.

"Would any of you give your hungry child a stone, if the child asked for some bread? Would you give your child a snake if the child asked for a fish? As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give good things to people who ask."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I pray even when it does not seem that God is listening? Am I able to be still and peaceful sometimes, remembering that God is with me? Is there someone for whom I often pray?

CLOSING

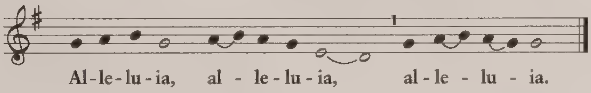
Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

Loving God, you give us this new school year
  and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray and work
  and learn together.
And grant a happy year to all the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



WEDNESDAY PRAYER

September 1, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is possible because God is near to us. God is near when we celebrate the eucharist and when we bless food before we eat it. God is near when we are in the park or in the store. God is near when we are frightened or lonely or full of joy. One of the most important names for God is "Emmanuel" which means "God is with us."

This is good news for all of us, who love God and want to share ourselves with God in prayer.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Isaiah 43:1–3

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

Descendants of Jacob, I, the Lord, created you
and formed your nation.
Israel, don't be afraid. I have rescued you.
I have called you by name; now you belong
to me.
When you cross deep rivers, I will be with you,
and you won't drown.
When you walk through fire,
you won't be burned
or scorched by the flames.
I am the Lord, your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
the God who saves you.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

It is hard to talk to someone we don't know. How does Isaiah introduce God to us? How would I introduce myself to God? What do we want to ask of God at the beginning of this school year?

CLOSING

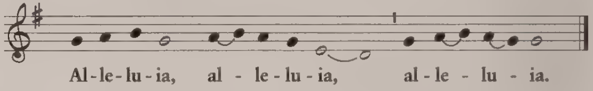
Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

Loving God, you give us this new school year
and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray and work
and learn together.
And grant a happy year to all the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



THURSDAY PRAYER

September 2, 1999

INTRODUCTION

The readings this week have reminded us to pray often and to have times of quiet during prayer. We have learned too, that God is with us even when we are in trouble.

In today's reading John reminds us that God wants us to love each other as much as God loves us. We have heard this many times already, but it is good to hear it again at the beginning of this school year. Perhaps we can make it the motto for our year!

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

I John 4:19–21

Listen to the words of the first letter of John:

We love because God loved us first. But if we say we love God and don't love each other, we are liars. We cannot see God. So how can we love God, if we don't love the people we can see?

The commandment that God has given us is: "Love God and love each other!"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Are there new students in the class who need someone to talk to? Is there someone at home who needs some of my attention? Are there people I should remember in my prayers?

CLOSING

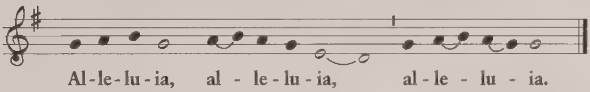
Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

Loving God, you give us this new school year
and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray and work
and learn together.
And grant a happy year to all the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



FRIDAY PRAYER

September 3, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Gregory the Great. Gregory was a good pope. He helped the people of Rome find food and rebuild their city after a terrible war. He changed the prayers of the Mass so that people could pray better. He opened a school for choir *(KWI-er)* members and for people who write church music. He even wrote some music himself.

The music called "Gregorian *(greh-GOR-ee-un)* chant" is named for him. In honor of Gregory the Great, we sing a Gregorian chant "alleluia" at the end of prayer each day.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

I Thessalonians 5:12–13, 16–18, 23–24

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

My friends, we ask you to be thoughtful of your leaders who work hard and tell you how to live for the Lord. Show them great respect and love because of their work. Try to get along with each other.

Always be joyful and never stop praying. Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ. This is what God wants you to do.

I pray that God, who gives peace, will make you completely holy. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless until our Lord Jesus Christ returns. The one who chose you can be trusted, and he will do this.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How do we show respect for our leaders? How do we try to get along with each other? Paul links joy, prayer, peace and holiness. Have I found that these things go together in my life?

CLOSING

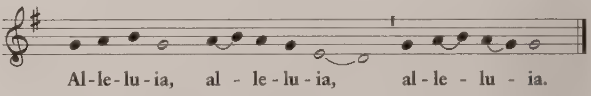
Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

Loving God, you give us this new school year
and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray and work
and learn together.
And grant a happy year to all the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



TUESDAY PRAYER

September 7, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Every year the church pays special attention to one of the gospels. This year it is the gospel of Matthew. This gospel tells us about the kingdom that Jesus came to announce, and about how the people of that kingdom should live.

In today's reading from Matthew's gospel, we hear how John the Baptist told people to turn to God and be ready.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 3:1–3, 5

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

John the Baptist started preaching in the desert of Judea *(joo-DEE-uh)*. He said, "Turn back to God! The kingdom of heaven will soon be here." John was the one the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)* was talking about, when he said,

"In the desert someone is shouting,
'Get the road ready for the Lord!
Make a straight path for him.'"

From Jerusalem and all Judea and from the Jordan River Valley crowds of people went to John. They told how sorry they were for their sins, and he baptized them in the river.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does it mean to "turn back to God"? How did John help to make the world ready for the coming of Jesus? How can I help to make the world ready?

CLOSING

Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

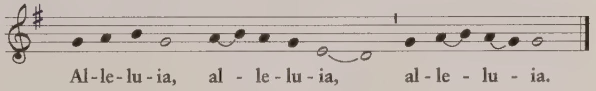
Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God, you give us this new school year
and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray and work
and learn together.
And grant a happy year to all the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



WEDNESDAY PRAYER

September 8, 1999

Reminder: Today please use October's Meal Prayer, the Angelus, on page 49, and the End of the Day Prayer on page 23.

INTRODUCTION

God planned to send a savior to the world. This savior would need a good mother. Today we celebrate the birth of the woman God picked. She was a Jewish woman named Miriam *(MEER-ee-um)* in Hebrew. In English, we call her Mary. She is the mother of Jesus. She is also the mother of all who believe in Jesus and follow his way. So we call her our Blessed Mother.

Today's reading teaches that everyone who obeys God truly belongs to the family of Jesus.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to page 12

READING

Luke 8:19–21

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Jesus' mother and brothers went to see him, but because of the crowd they could not get near him. Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to see you."

Jesus answered, "My mother and my brothers are those people who hear and obey God's message."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What could Jesus' statement mean? Do we treat others as members of Jesus' family? Do I live as one who hears and obeys God's message?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

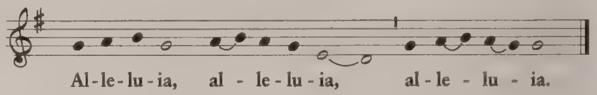
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

Mary, our mother,
you sheltered Jesus in your own body,
raised him with a mother's care,
and followed him in faith.
With you, we celebrate God's saving love.
Let us all say:

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you!
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

sing "alleluia"



Prayer on Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary

all make the sign
of the cross

LEADER Mary said “yes” to the plan of God, alleluia!
ALL **Mary carried in her body**
the light of the world, alleluia!

in Christmastime or Eastertime
light a candle

LEADER Through the grace of our loving God,
Mary became the mother of Jesus
and the mother of all who follow him.

the leader’s part is in the left-hand column;
the responses are on the right

Holy Mary, **pray for us.**
Holy Mother of God, **pray for us.**
Health of the sick, **pray for us.**
Shelter for the homeless, **pray for us.**
Comfort for the troubled, **pray for us.**
Justice for the victim, **pray for us.**
Help of Christians, **pray for us.**

LEADER Pray for us, holy Mother of God.
ALL **That we may become worthy**
of the promises of Christ.

LEADER Holy God,
through the prayers of Mary, our Mother,
make us faithful disciples of Jesus, your Son.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
ALL **Amen.**

all make the sign
of the cross

in Christmastime or Eastertime
put out the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

September 9, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Peter Claver, a priest who left Spain in 1610 and went to Colombia in South America. There, he helped the slaves who were forced to work on sugar farms. Someone said that Father Claver worked for the slaves as if he were the slaves' own slave. The farm owners made things difficult for Father Claver, but he bravely continued.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 3:13–17

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus left Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)* and went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John kept objecting and said, "I ought to be baptized by you. Why have you come to me?"

Jesus answered, "For now this is how it should be, because we must do all that God wants us to do." Then John agreed.

So Jesus was baptized. And as soon as he came out of the water, the sky opened, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my own dear Son, and I am pleased with him."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why is God "pleased" with Jesus? Why does God want people to know that Jesus is "my own dear Son"? Is God "pleased" with the church? Is God "pleased" with my neighborhood and with my group of friends?

CLOSING

Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

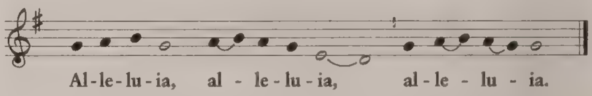
Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God, you give us this new school year
and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray and work
and learn together.
And grant a happy year to all the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



FRIDAY PRAYER

September 10, 1999

INTRODUCTION

At sundown today Jews around the world will begin the celebration of Rosh ha-Shanah *(ROSH hah-SHAH-nuh)*. It is the first day of the year 5760, according to the Jewish calendar. In each Jewish meeting place, a shofar *(SHOW-far)*, which is a ram's horn, is blown. The shofar calls Jews to remember the past year and to make plans to practice their faith better during the coming year.

Be sure to wish your Jewish friends a happy new year! Our reading from the Jewish scriptures helps us understand the spirit of this day.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Ezekiel 36:24–25, 26–27, 28

Listen to the words of the prophet Ezekiel *(ee-ZEE-kee-ul)*:

The LORD says this: "I will gather you from the foreign nations and bring you home. I will sprinkle you with clean water, and you will be clean and acceptable to me.

"I will take away your stubborn heart and give you a new heart and a desire to be faithful. You will have only pure thoughts, because I will put my Spirit in you and make you eager to obey my laws and teachings. You will be my people, and I will be your God."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What "new year's resolutions" shall I make today? What does it mean to have a "stubborn heart" and a "new heart"?

CLOSING

adapted from *The New Union Prayerbook*

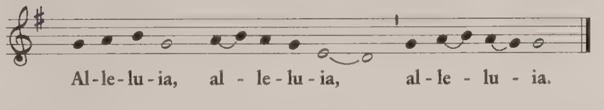
Let us remember these intentions:

O God, we are too weak to walk unaided.
Be with us as a strong and wise friend,
  and teach us to walk by the light
    of your truth.
Loving God, give life and peace
  to those who keep this day of beginnings.
Strengthen the Jewish community.
Make them secure
  in their homes around the world,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, September 12, 1999

Reminder: A Blessing of the School Year is on page 15. A Blessing of the Cross is on page 29. The Psalm for September is on page 6 of the student booklet *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

With the start of the new school year, we again study math, science and reading. And we also take up the study of our Christian faith. During this year we will listen to the gospel of Jesus and try to let it teach us how to live.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 18:23, 24, 26–28, 29–30, 32–33

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "This story will show you what the kingdom of heaven is like: One day an official was brought in who owed the king fifty million silver coins. The official got down on his knees and began begging, 'Have pity on me, and I will pay you every cent I owe!' The king felt sorry for him and let him go free. He even told the official that he did not have to pay back the money.

"As the official was leaving, he happened to meet another official, who owed him a hundred silver coins. The man got down on his knees and began begging, 'Have pity on me, and I will pay you back.' But the first official refused to have pity.

"The king called the first official back in and said, 'You're an evil man! When you begged for mercy, I said you did not have to pay back a cent. Don't you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?'"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do we know any people like the king? Do we know any people like the first official? Am I a forgiving person?

CLOSING

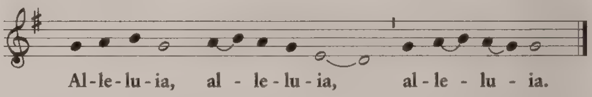
Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God, you give us this new school year
 and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray, and work,
 and learn together.
And grant a happy year to all the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



MONDAY PRAYER

September 13, 1999

Reminder: Tuesday we celebrate the feast of the Holy Cross. The Blessing of the Cross on page 29 can be used in class. Talk this over with the teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember John Chrysostom *(KRIS-uh-stum)*, a famous bishop and teacher of the early church. His name means "golden mouth" because he gave beautiful speeches.

The cross is the symbol for the way Jesus defeated sin, hatred and death. From earliest times Christians have treasured it. This is what John Chrysostom wrote about it: "Let the sign of the cross be continually made in the heart, the mouth, on the forehead, at table, in the bath, in bed, coming in and going out, in joy and sadness, sitting, standing, walking."

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to page 12

READING

Matthew 4:18–22

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

While Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)*, he saw two brothers. One was Simon, also known as Peter, and the other was Andrew. They were fishermen, and they were casting their net into the lake. Jesus said to them, "Come with me! I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish." Right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him.

Jesus walked on until he saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee *(ZEH-beh-dee)*. They were in a boat with their father, mending their nets. Jesus asked them to come with him too. Right away they left the boat and their father and went with Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What did the fishermen give up in order to follow Jesus? What are some things people today might give up for Jesus? Have I given up anything to follow Jesus?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God, we thank you for sending apostles
to the whole world.
We welcome those who bring your good news.
We pray for them and listen to their teaching.
Call on us, one day, to become apostles, too.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

September 14, 1999

Reminder: The Blessing of the Cross on page 29 may be used today.

INTRODUCTION

Today Christians celebrate the Holy Cross. The cross is the symbol for the way Jesus defeated sin, hatred and death. Christians are signed with the cross when they are baptized and also when they are buried. The sign of the cross shows our willingness to follow Jesus and our joy at being part of his family.

In today's reading, Jesus reminds us that it is not always easy to be his follower. We must sometimes suffer as he did. Jesus asks us to remain faithful and strong.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Luke 9:23–26

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Jesus said to all the people, "If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross each day and follow me. If you want to save your life, you will destroy it. But if you give up your life for me, you will save it.

"What will you gain, if you own the whole world but destroy yourself or waste your life? If you are ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in his glory and in the glory of his Father and the holy angels."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How do we take up our cross to follow Jesus? Why do you think someone might be ashamed of Jesus or his message?

CLOSING

adapted from the *Book of Blessings*

Let us remember these intentions:

On this feast of the Holy Cross,
let us look at the cross in this room
and think for a minute
about how much Jesus loves us.

stop;
give everyone a few moments to pray

Lord, your people have raised this cross
as a sign of redemption.
May the cross be our comfort in trouble,
our shelter in the face of danger,
our safeguard on life's journey,
until you welcome us to our heavenly home.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

A Blessing of the Cross

Flowers or incense can be placed near the classroom cross or near another cross that has been brought for the occasion. Crosses that are brought from home can be placed on desks and blessed by their owners as the leader blesses the classroom cross.

Rehearse the response, ***"For by your holy cross. . . ."*** *Practice how you will bow to the cross.*

Begin and end this prayer with a hymn, such as "Lift high the cross" (page 154 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students*).*

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you!

ALL
For by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.

READER
Philippians 2:8–11
Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Christ was humble.
He obeyed God and even died on a cross.
Then God gave Christ the highest place
and honored his name above all others.
So at the name of Jesus
everyone will bow down,
those in heaven, on earth,
and under the earth.
And to the glory of God the Father
everyone will openly agree,
"Jesus Christ is Lord!"

The word of the Lord.

LEADER
adapted from the *Book of Blessings*
The sign of the cross shall be in the heavens
when the Lord comes.
Lift up your heads!
Your redemption is near when the Lord comes.

▶ hold out your hand
toward the cross
in blessing

Loving God,
in your goodness be near us.
We have raised this cross
as a sign of our faith.
May we always hold fast
to the mystery of Christ's suffering
and enter the joy of his risen life.
He is Lord for ever and ever.

ALL
Amen.

LEADER
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you!

ALL
For by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.

▶ all make
a deep bow
toward the cross

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

September 15, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today, we continue to celebrate the Holy Cross by remembering Our Lady of Sorrows. This is a title for Mary, the mother of Jesus. She was sorrowful to see Jesus carrying his cross, and she followed him to Mount Calvary *(KAL-vuh-ree)*. She stayed near until he died.

Mary feels the pain of all her children. She wants us to have compassion for all who suffer.

Today begins Hispanic Heritage Month in the United States. Hispanic peoples give special honor to Our Lady of Sorrows. They have many titles of respect for Mary.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

▶ turn to
page 12

READING

John 19:25–27

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus' mother stood beside his cross with her sister and Mary the wife of Clopas. Mary Magdalene *(MAG-duh-lin)* was standing there too. When Jesus saw his mother and his favorite disciple with her, he said to his mother, "This man is now your son." Then he said to the disciple, "She is now your mother." From then on, that disciple took her into his own home.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Does it hurt me when a friend or family member is laughed at or put down? How do we share Christ's suffering? How does Christ share ours?

CLOSING

adapted from the *Book of Blessings*

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us look at the cross in this room
and think for a minute of all those who suffer
and who do the will of God.

▶ stop;
give everyone a few moments to pray

Lord, your people have raised this cross
as a sign of redemption.
May the cross be our comfort in trouble,
our shelter in the face of danger,
our safeguard on life's journey,
until you welcome us to our heavenly home.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

September 16, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Pope Cornelius *(kor-NEE-lee-us)*, who lived in Rome, and Bishop Cyprian *(SIP-ree-un)*, who lived a short boat ride away, in North Africa. These friends lived in the third century, when many people left the church because Christians were being hunted and killed.

Cornelius and Cyprian were filled with compassion. They showed those who remained and suffered how to forgive those who had left the church. Both of these brave men, and many other Christians, died for their faith.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 5:1–5, 8–10

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus' disciples gathered around him, and he taught them:

"God blesses those people who depend
only on him.
They belong to the kingdom of heaven!
God blesses those people who grieve *(greev)*.
They will find comfort!
God blesses those people who are humble.
The earth will belong to them!
God blesses those people whose hearts are pure.
They will see him!
God blesses those people who make peace.
They will be called his children!
God blesses those people
who are treated badly for doing right.
They belong to the kingdom of heaven."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In the reading, God's blessings are called "beatitudes." What additional "beatitudes" might Jesus compose for students in this school?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God calls us to work together this year.
We will share our time and ideas.
We will protect and encourage one another.
We begin by learning each other's names.
Please be silent now and pray for each person
in this class.
Say each person's name in your heart.
If there is a name you do not know,
learn it sometime today.

stop;
give everyone a few moments to pray

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

September 17, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Jesus often told stories to his followers, to help them understand God's work. These stories are called parables. Each one is a wonderful treasure given to us by Jesus. Today's reading tells us a parable. We can listen to it, just as the early followers of Jesus listened, so that we can remember the story all our lives.

The lives of the saints are parables too. Today we remember Hildegard *(HILL-duh-gard)* of Bingen, an amazing saint. She was a doctor, writer, poet, preacher, musician, playwright and religious sister. She used her many talents in the service of God and in the care of God's people.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 5:14 – 16

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lampstand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How can we make our school "a city built on top of a hill"? How are Christians meant to "give light to everyone in the house"? How do I bring light into my family?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God calls us to work together this year.
We will share our time and ideas.
We will protect and encourage one another.
We begin by learning each other's names.
Please be silent now and pray for each person
in this class.
Say each person's name in your heart.
If there is a name you do not know,
learn it sometime today.

stop;
give everyone a few moments to pray

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, September 19, 1999

INTRODUCTION

A vineyard *(VIN-yerd)* is where grape vines grow. The countryside where Jesus and the Jewish prophets *(PRAH-fits)* lived was filled with grape vines. Jesus and the prophets often used a vineyard as a symbol of God's kingdom.

September 19 is Catechetical *(KAT-ih-KET-ih-kul)* Sunday. Let us try to greet our religion teachers on that day, and pray for them.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 20:1, 4, 5–6, 7, 8, 9–10, 11, 12–13, 15

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like this: "Early one morning a man went out to hire some workers for his vineyard. He said he would pay them what was fair. So they went. At noon and again about three in the afternoon he made the same agreement with others who were loafing around with nothing to do. Finally, about five in the afternoon the man found some others standing there. He told them to go work in his vineyard.

"That evening, the workers who had been hired at five in the afternoon were given a full day's pay. The workers who had been hired first began complaining, 'The ones who were hired last worked for only one hour. But you paid them the same that you did us. And we worked in the hot sun all day long!'

"The owner answered one of them, 'Friend, I didn't cheat you. I paid you exactly what we agreed on. Why should you be jealous, if I want to be generous?'"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Would I give a whole day's pay to someone who worked only one hour? What generous people do I know? Are they generous with other things besides money?

CLOSING

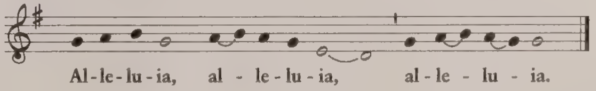
Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you are faithful to your promises.
You give us daily bread and more besides.
Teach us to be grateful for what we have
  and to rejoice in the good fortune of others.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



MONDAY PRAYER

September 20, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Andrew Kim Taegon and many other Koreans who bravely died for their faith between the years 1839 and 1867. Andrew and many others died trying to convince their nation that the church was not an enemy. Today many Koreans are faithful Catholics.

At sundown yesterday, Yom Kippur *(yahm kee-POOR)* began. It is the Day of Atonement *(uh-TONE-ment)*, the most holy day on the Jewish calendar. The need to ask God for forgiveness is so important that Jews do not work or travel on this day. Instead, they pray and fast. Let us ask God to bless the Jewish people during their holy day. Our reading tells how Yom Kippur is to be kept.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Leviticus 23:27–28, 32

Listen to the words of the book of Leviticus *(luh-VIT-uh-kus)*:

The Lord God said to Moses:
"The tenth day of the seventh month is the Great Day of Forgiveness. It is a solemn day of worship; everyone must go without eating to show sorrow for their sins, and sacrifices must be burned. No one is to work on that day—it is the Great Day of Forgiveness, when sacrifices will be offered to me, so that I will forgive your sins.

"This is a time of complete rest just like the Sabbath, and everyone must go without eating from the evening of the ninth to the evening of the tenth."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Jews and Christians try not to work on holy days, so they can spend the day in worship, rest and celebration. Is Sunday a holy day for my family? Do we go to church? Do we spend time together? What does Sunday mean to me?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God, you are quick to forgive
  all who ask your forgiveness.
Show us our mistakes.
Open our hearts to sorrow for sin.
Help us to ask pardon from those we hurt.
O God, give life and peace
  to those who keep this Day of Atonement.
Strengthen the Jewish community.
Make them secure in their homes
    around the world,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

September 21, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today is the feast of the apostle Matthew. He was working as a tax collector when he met Jesus. The Jews did not like to give their money to pay the Roman tax, and so many people did not like Matthew. They were surprised that Jesus became his friend. Jesus made many friends among those who were rejected.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 9:9–13

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus saw a tax collector named Matthew sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, "Come with me." Matthew got up and went with him.

Later, Jesus and his disciples were having dinner at Matthew's house. Many tax collectors and other sinners were also there. Some people asked Jesus' disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and other sinners?"

Jesus heard them and answered, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. Go and learn what the Scriptures mean when they say, 'Instead of offering sacrifices to me, I want you to be merciful to others.' I didn't come to invite good people to be my followers. I came to invite sinners."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Becoming a friend of Jesus helped Matthew to become a better person. How has my friendship with Jesus guided me? How do my friends encourage one another in goodness?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God, we thank you for sending apostles
to the whole world.
We welcome those who bring your good news.
We pray for them and listen to their teaching.
Call on us, one day, to become apostles, too.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

September 22, 1999

INTRODUCTION

In today's reading Jesus teaches us some important things about prayer. He reminds us that God is not like a famous person we might hear about on the news. God is like a father who knows us well, who loves us deeply, who lives in the same house with us.

Our words to God should be simple, clear and real, just like the words we speak to our own parents. God is not waiting for fancy speeches. God is waiting for us to speak from our hearts.

As you listen closely to the reading today, you will soon recognize it. It is a prayer we say almost every day.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 6:9 – 13

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "You should pray like this:
  Our Father in heaven,
  help us to honor your name.
  Come and set up your kingdom,
  so that everyone on earth will obey you,
    as you are obeyed in heaven.
  Give us our food for today.
  Forgive our sins,
    as we forgive others.
  Keep us from being tempted
    and protect us from evil."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Are my prayers sometimes just empty words? Why is the Lord's Prayer so important to Christians? Do I forgive others as I want God to forgive me?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you forgive us with all your heart
    for the wrong we do.
Help us to forgive those who wrong us.
Help us to make peace in our families,
  our schools and our neighborhoods.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

September 23, 1999

INTRODUCTION

At 7:31 this morning,* as you were getting ready for school, the exact middle of the earth was turned toward the sun. This means that today will have equal hours of daylight and darkness. This is called an equinox *(EE-kwi-nox)*, a "day of balance." Buddhists look upon this day as a symbol of peace, equality and harmony.

Now the hours of darkness will grow longer than the hours of daylight. Soon it will be dark before supper time. With darkness sometimes comes danger and fear. Today's reading reminds us that God is always a source of strength and balance for us.

*Eastern Daylight Time

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 7:24–29

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "Anyone who hears and obeys these teachings of mine is like a wise person who built a house on solid rock. Rain poured down, rivers flooded, and winds beat against that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on solid rock.

"Anyone who hears my teachings and doesn't obey them is like a foolish person who built a house on sand. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded, and the winds blew and beat against that house. Finally, it fell with a crash."

When Jesus finished speaking, the crowds were surprised at his teaching. He taught them like someone with authority.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How is listening to the word of God like building a house? In what ways is God like a rock? What could Jesus mean by the rain and wind that end up knocking down the house?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, our strength and our safety,
  you are the rock that is firm beneath our feet,
   the house that is our true home.
Teach and guide us.
Build up your truth in our hearts,
  so that we may live with you always.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

September 24, 1999

Reminder: Wednesday is the feast of the Archangels. A blessing for this day is on page 43. Talk this over with the teacher.

INTRODUCTION

At sundown today the feast of Sukkot *(soo-COAT)* begins. The Jewish festival of thanksgiving starts just as the full harvest moon rises in the autumn sky. Many Jewish people build a booth in their yard or meeting place for this celebration. Each booth is decorated with vegetables, fruits, bright fabrics and drawings. The booths remind us of shelters people once built in the fields during the harvest.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Nehemiah 8:13, 14–16, 17

Listen to the words of the prophet Nehemiah *(nee-huh-MY-uh)*:

The leaders of all the family groups learned from the Law that the people of Israel were to live in shelters when they celebrated the festival in the seventh month of the year. They also learned that they were to go into the woods and gather branches of leafy trees such as olives, myrtles *(MER-tulz)*, and palms for making these shelters.

So the people gathered branches and made shelters on the flat roofs of their houses, in their yards, in the courtyard of the temple, and in the open areas. They lived in them and joyfully celebrated the Festival of Shelters.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Sukkot is a harvest festival. How can my family and friends rejoice in this harvest season?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Our God is good and generous,
  giving plants for food and shelter,
  giving flowers for beauty,
  giving sunshine and rain
    for the growth of all living things.
With all who offer songs of thanksgiving
  we join our voices.
O God, give life and peace
  to those who keep the festival of Sukkot.
Strengthen the Jewish community.
Make them secure in their homes
    around the world,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, September 26, 1999

Reminder: Before the next meeting, you may want to make copies of the Psalm for October, on page 48.

INTRODUCTION

Our reading today tells a parable that Jesus shared with his followers. A parable is a story that uses symbols. Symbols can make something complicated become more clear to us. Jesus knew that the knowledge of God is too wonderful and too great for any human mind to understand. So he told many parables.

Each parable can tell us something about God's mystery and God's love for us. Let us see what we can learn from this parable, the parable of the two children.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 21:28–31

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "I will tell you a story about a man who had two sons. Then you can tell me what you think. The father went to the older son and said, 'Go work in the vineyard *(VIN-yerd)* today!' His son told him that he would not do it, but later he changed his mind and went. The man then told his younger son to go work in the vineyard. The boy said he would, but he did not go."

Then Jesus asked, "Which one of the sons obeyed his father?"

"The older one," the leaders answered.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How am I like the older son? How am I like the younger son? Does the father love both boys? What have I learned from this parable about God and God's love?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Jesus, our brother,
  you are the sign of God's presence with us.
Accept us as your disciples.
Teach us to be faithful children
  of a loving God.
And lead us to share in your kingdom,
  where we may be joyful with you,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

September 27, 1999

Reminder: October begins Friday. You may want to make copies of October's Psalm, Meal Prayer, and End of the Day Prayer, found on pages 48 to 50. Talk this over with your teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Vincent de Paul. Vincent was born in France in the year 1581. He moved to Paris when he was a young priest. There he organized groups to help people pray and serve the needs of others.

Vincent loved the poor, especially children. In our own day members of an organization named for him supply food, money and clothing to those in need. There may be a chapter of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in your parish.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 8:5–9, 10, 13

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

An army officer came up to Jesus and said, "Lord, my servant is at home in such terrible pain that he can't even move."

"I will go and heal him," Jesus replied.

But the officer said, "Lord, I'm not good enough for you to come into my house. Just give the order, and my servant will get well. I have officers who give orders to me, and I have soldiers who take orders from me. I can say to one of them, 'Go!' and he goes. I can say to another, 'Come!' and he comes."

When Jesus heard this, he was so surprised that he turned and said to the crowd following him, "I tell you that in all of Israel I've never found anyone with this much faith!"

Then Jesus said to the officer, "You may go home now. Your faith has made it happen."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How did the officer show his faith in Jesus? How do I show my faith? Was it easier for people in Jesus' time to show their faith than it is today?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of grace and wisdom,
you continually raise up good people
who show with their lives
that they follow a holy and loving God.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

September 28, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Wenceslaus *(WEN-sis-lahs)*, who became king of Bohemia *(bo-HEE-mee-uh)* when he was only 18 years old. His country is now part of the Czech *(chek)* Republic, in central Europe. Let us remember all the peoples of central Europe in our prayers today as we honor Wenceslaus, one of their patron saints.

There is a Christmas carol about "good king Wenceslaus." The king was famous for his kindness to people in need and for his wise laws. He was attacked one day by his brother, who wanted his power. As he lay dying, he said, "Brother, may God forgive you."

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

➧ turn to page 12

READING

Matthew 8:23–27

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus got into a boat with his disciples. A terrible storm suddenly struck the lake, and waves started splashing into their boat.

Jesus was sound asleep, so the disciples went over to him and woke him up. They said, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

But Jesus replied, "Why are you so afraid? You surely don't have much faith." Then he got up and ordered the wind and the waves to calm down. And everything was calm.

The men in the boat were amazed and said, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Are there dangerous storms in my life and in the lives of people I know? Do we believe Jesus can help us through the storm? How do we pray during times of sadness or trouble?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  we seek you in the wind,
  and find you in the storm.
We call to you in faith,
  and trust you in danger.
Be with us always
  when we pass through troubled waters.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

September 29, 1999

Reminder: The Blessing of Flower Bulbs on page 43 may be used today.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the feast of Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, the three angels who are named in the Bible. The name Gabriel means "God is mighty." Gabriel is the divine messenger sent by God to Daniel, to Mary, and to Zechariah.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to page 12

READING

Luke 1:8, 11 – 15, 16, 19

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

One day Zechariah was serving God as a priest. All at once an angel from the Lord appeared to Zechariah at the right side of the altar. Zechariah was confused and afraid when he saw the angel. But the angel told him:

"Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayers. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you must name him John. His birth will make you very happy, and many people will be glad. Your son will be a great servant of the Lord. John will lead many people in Israel to turn back to the Lord their God."

The angel said, "I am Gabriel, God's servant, and I was sent to tell you this good news."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What kind of good news can we bring to people who are sad or worried?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

sing this to the melody of "Hymn to Joy," in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*, page 156.

Michael, image of God's justice,
angel warrior, God's right arm,
march beside us on our journey;
ward off evil, fear and harm.
Gabriel, voice of God's salvation,
messenger with news of grace,
teach us of God's works and wonders
and the beauty of God's face.

Raphael, star to brighten darkness,
giving friendship, giving sight,
Walk the path that we must travel,
our companion through the night.
Joined in song by angel guardians,
let our alleluias ring.
God is with us now and always.
Glory to our Lord and King!

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"

A Blessing of Flower Bulbs

Bring some bulbs that grow well in your part of the country. Bring a shovel and copies of the song "Michael, image of God's justice," on page 42. The refrain "In the sight of the angels" can be sung as well. See the Hymnal for Catholic Students, *page 65.*

Gather where you will plant the bulbs. Try to find a sunny spot that is not too wet.

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Angels are messengers of God's love and care. They say to us in the autumn, "Be hopeful. Trust in the Lord." To celebrate our trust in God, we will plant some flower bulbs. One day they will surprise us with their beauty.

READER Mark 4:26–28
Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus said, "God's kingdom is like what happens when a farmer scatters seed in a field. The farmer sleeps at night and is up and around during the day. Yet the seeds keep sprouting and growing, and he doesn't understand how. It is the ground that makes the seeds sprout and grow into plants that produce grain."

The gospel of the Lord.

LEADER
Let us praise God,
who has brought us into this autumn season:

ALL
In the sight of the angels,
I will sing your praises, Lord.

LEADER
Let us praise God,
who will bring us through the winter cold:

ALL
In the sight of the angels,
I will sing your praises, Lord.

LEADER:
Let us praise God,
who will bring us to the beauty of springtime:

ALL
In the sight of the angels,
I will sing your praises, Lord.

LEADER

hold out one hand
over the bulbs in blessing,
and say:

Creator God,
we ask your blessing on these bulbs.
May they sleep safely in the winter earth
and awaken with joy in the warmth of spring.
May they remind us to trust in your promises.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

plant the bulbs,
and then sing
"Michael, image of God's justice"

when finished,
all make
the sign
of the cross

THURSDAY PRAYER

September 30, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Jerome, a priest of the early church.

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew and Greek languages, but by Jerome's time most people spoke Latin. The Pope asked Jerome to translate the Bible into Latin so that more people could read it. Jerome's translation of the Bible was used for over a thousand years. In the fifteenth century it became the very first book printed on the very first printing press.

Let us think of Jerome as we read from the Bible today. We will hear Jesus sum up the entire Bible in two sentences.

A PSALM FOR SEPTEMBER

turn to
page 12

READING

Matthew 22:35–40

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

A man tried to test Jesus by asking, "Teacher, what is the most important commandment in the Law?"

Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, 'Love others as much as you love yourself.' All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets *(PRAH-fits)* are based on these two commandments."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Saint Jerome was quarrelsome and had a terrible temper. None of the saints were perfect. Are we waiting to become perfect before we do great works for Christ? Maybe trying to do Christ's work helps us become more perfect.

CLOSING

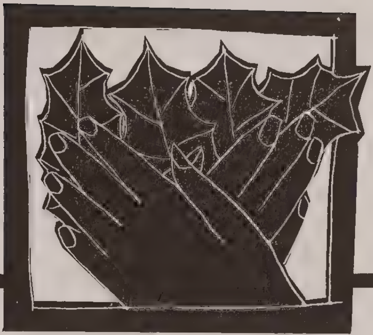
Let us remember these intentions:

God of the covenant,
 you give us your law as a gift
 and not a burden.
It guides us to live in peace with you,
 with each other, and within ourselves.
Help us to keep your law with all our hearts.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



OCTOBER

Friday, October 1, to Sunday, October 31

ORDINARY TIME
OCTOBER 1999

ABOUT THE MONTH

LOOKING AHEAD

If you live in the North, all at once you will notice that the colors of the trees have become bright. Leaves begin to skip through the air and pile up on the ground. If you live in the South, you may not see these signs during October unless you see them on television. But we all can see certain signs every October, like football and soccer games, scout hikes, orange and green squash in the grocery stores and Indian corn on front doors.

▪ OCTOBER IS A GOOD MONTH TO ENJOY THE OUTDOORS. It is also a good month to think about our earth and what we have done to help or hurt it. We might put new energy into recycling newspapers and aluminum cans or into the other projects we have begun.

This interest in the earth will be carried into our October prayers. Our Psalm this month is the Song of the Three Young Men, from the book of Daniel. An evil king put three of his Hebrew officials into a blazing furnace because they refused to give up the practice of their religion. But they did not die. Instead, they stood up in the fire and called on all creation to sing God's praises. Then even the king joined in their song!

▪ MOST OF THE DAILY READINGS THIS MONTH WILL BE TAKEN FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS. Genesis is filled with wonderful stories about the beginnings of the earth and of the Hebrew people.

In the book of Genesis there are two stories of God's creation. In October we will read the second one. In that story we not only learn about the origin of the human race, we also learn about the origin of sin. We will read the story of the disobedience of the first man and woman. Then we will read of the sinfulness of one of their children, Cain.

Then we will learn more about Abraham and his family. There is much to know about this man who is called the "father of faith." Each year, we learn a little more.

▪ THE MONTH OF OCTOBER ENDS AND NOVEMBER BEGINS WITH A CELEBRATION THAT MOST STUDENTS REALLY ENJOY — HALLOWEEN! It falls on a Sunday this year. A blessing for Halloween is on page 78. It can be used as part of your celebration.

Halloween leads into two important days at the very beginning of November, All Saints and All Souls. For ideas about preparing for those days, see November's Looking Ahead, on pages 80 and 81.

PREPARATION FOR OCTOBER

If members of the class have copies of *Blessed Be God!* (the prayer book for children), help them find the Psalm for October, the Meal Prayer and the End of the Day Prayer. Otherwise, you may make copies of these prayers for everyone. They are found on pages 48, 49 and 50. Remind everyone to keep these papers in a safe place. They will be needed for the whole month.

The feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is on October 7. You might want to say the rosary during October. Instructions are on pages 348 and 349.

▪ THERE ARE TWO BLESSINGS FOR YOU TO USE DURING OCTOBER. The first is a blessing of pets on page 54 for Saint Francis's Day, October 4. Francis of Assisi became famous for his love of all God's creatures. So his day is a good time to ask God to bless our pets and all the animals on earth. Pets can be brought from home, or drawings and photos of the pets can be used.

The month ends with a blessing for Halloween on page 78. It can be used all by itself or as part of a party or a parade of costumes. Talk to your teacher about these possibilities.

- REMEMBER TO GIVE THE CORRECT RESPONSE AFTER THE READING. If the reading is part of the gospel, the reader says, "The gospel of the Lord." Then we respond, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." But if the reading is from another book of the Bible, the reader says, "The word of the Lord," and we respond, "Thanks be to God."

- THERE ARE PRAYERS IN THIS BOOK TO PRAY WHEN SOMETHING SAD OR TROUBLING HAPPENS. Prayers for Sad Days are on page 346. Prayers for the Sick are on page 347.

- SUGGESTED HYMNS: "All creatures of our God and king" (page 100 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) is very similar to the Song of the Three Young Men and is based on Saint Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of the Sun." This is a good song to sing throughout the month of October.

Another good hymn for this month is "For the beauty of the earth" (page 120 in the hymnal).

You may want to sing the petitions each day. This can be done by singing them on a single note. The music on page 40 of the hymnal can be used to sing the petitions and the response, "Lord, have mercy."

THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

By October you should be familiar with the pattern of Weekly Prayer or with those parts of it that you have been using regularly.

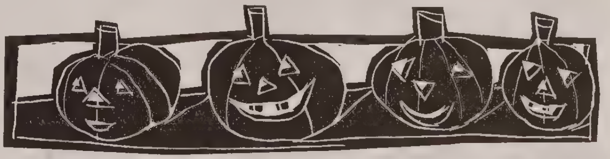
- IT IS HARD TO LEARN PRAYERS BY HEART IF YOU USE THEM ONLY ONCE A WEEK. That is why it is a good idea to give every member of the class a copy of the book *Blessed Be God!* It contains all the Psalms, Meal Prayers and End of the Day Prayers used during the year. (The prayers for October are on pages 9 to 11.) Or, students can be given photocopies of these prayers each month. Keep them in your religion book so that you can use them at home as well as during class.

- TAKE A FEW MINUTES DURING CLASS TO GO OVER THE METHOD FOR PRAYING THE PSALM. The same method will be used all year long. Members of the class are divided into Side A and Side B. The first group prays with the reader. The other group prays with the leader.

The leader begins with the first statement: "Bless God beyond the stars. Give praise and glory." Then the entire class, led by the reader, gives the answering statement: "Bless God, heaven and earth. Give praise and glory for ever." Each side takes turns reading the Psalm. The leader reads a final statement, and the class ends the Psalm with the "Glory to the Father."

- WHEN YOU LEAD PRAYER, BE SURE TO READ EACH WORD CLEARLY. We all need to pray slowly so that we can almost "taste" the words of praise.

The reading for each Weekly Prayer in October is taken from the Sunday liturgy. Instead of using the Weekly Prayers, you may want to substitute the prayers for October's special days. Some of these are: Saint Francis of Assisi (October 4), Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7), Saint Luke the evangelist (October 18), and Halloween (October 31). There is a blessing of pets on page 54 and a blessing for Halloween on page 78.



A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

Daniel 3:56 – 57, 62 – 63, 66, 70, 72 – 73

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Bless God beyond the stars.
Give praise and glory.

ALL **Bless God, heaven and earth.**
Give praise and glory for ever.

SIDE A Bless God, sun and moon.
Give praise and glory.

SIDE B Bless God, stars of heaven.
Give praise and glory for ever.

SIDE A Bless God, fire and heat.
Give praise and glory.

SIDE B Bless God, frost and sleet.
Give praise and glory for ever.

SIDE A Bless God, light and darkness.
Give praise and glory.

SIDE B Bless God, lightning and clouds.
Give praise and glory for ever.

LEADER Bless God beyond the stars.
Give praise and glory.

ALL **Bless God, heaven and earth.**
Give praise and glory for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

▶ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

OCTOBER

MEAL PRAYER

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ➧ all make the sign
of the cross

LEADER The angel spoke God's message to Mary,
and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

ALL **Hail Mary, full of grace,**
the Lord is with you!
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

LEADER "I am the lowly servant of the Lord:
let it be done to me
according to your word."

ALL **Hail Mary, full of grace . . .**

LEADER And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

ALL **Hail Mary, full of grace . . .**

LEADER Pray for us, holy Mother of God:

ALL **That we may become worthy**
of the promises of Christ.

LEADER Let us pray.

Lord, fill our hearts with your grace:
once, through the message of an angel
you revealed to us the incarnation of your Son;
now, through his suffering and death
lead us to the glory of his resurrection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

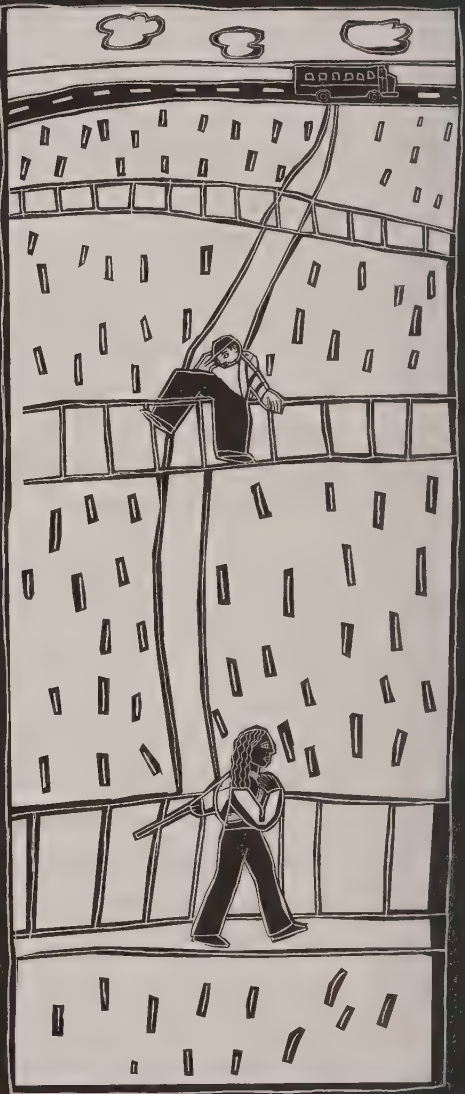
ALL **Amen.**

➧ all make the sign
of the cross

The Angelus, from *A Book of Prayers*

OCTOBER

END OF THE DAY PRAYER



▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

SIDE A Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith.

SIDE B Where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

SIDE A O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

SIDE B For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the almighty and merciful God
bless and protect us:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

The Prayer of Saint Francis

FRIDAY PRAYER

October 1, 1999

Reminder: October's Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer are on pages 9 to 11 in *Blessed Be God!*

Monday is the feast of St. Francis. You may want to use the prayers on page 54 to bless pets. Talk to the teacher about this.

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. She also is called the "Little Flower." Thérèse wanted to be a missionary but was not healthy enough to travel. So she prayed every day for missionaries. She also tried to do the ordinary things of life as well as she could. In this way, she grew close to God.

Anyone can follow her example. Today's reading shows us that long before Thérèse's time, the prophet Micah *(MY-kuh)* taught people how simple it is to grow close to God.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Micah 6:6-7, 8

Listen to the words of the prophet Micah *(MY-kuh)*:

What offering should I bring when I bow down
to worship the LORD God Most High?
Should I try to please him
by sacrificing calves a year old?
Will thousands of sheep or rivers of olive oil
make God satisfied with me?

The LORD God has told us what is right
and what he demands:
"See that justice is done,
let mercy be your first concern,
and humbly obey your God."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Does religion ever seem complicated? Do my friends and I act with justice? Is there a lot of kindness in our school? What does it mean for me to "humbly obey God"?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, through your living Word,
strengthen those who believe,
speak to those who listen,
and protect those who proclaim your gospel.
Be with all those
who bring your good news
to the far corners of the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With the Second Reading for Sunday, October 3, 1999

Reminder: October's Psalm is in *Blessed Be God!* on page 9.

INTRODUCTION

When our parish family gathers for the eucharist every Sunday, we hear readings from the Bible. Some come from the Hebrew scriptures, and others, like the reading we will hear today, come from the writings of the apostles. Every Sunday we hear a reading from one of the four gospels. The same readings are used by Catholics and many other Christians all over the world.

When we hear the word of God, it is up to us to make a place for that word in our hearts.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Philippians 4:6–9

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Brothers and sisters:

Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

Finally, my friends, keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. You know the teachings I gave you, and you know what you heard me say and saw me do. So follow my example. And God, who gives peace, will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I use the time for intentions to offer my worries to God? Does God's peace affect the way I think and feel? Do I keep my mind on things that are "true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper"? Does watching TV sometimes fill my mind with things that are not "worthwhile and worthy of praise"?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Wise and loving God,
fill our minds with your word
so that we may know what is true and right,
so that we may know what is holy,
so that we may know your peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

October 4, 1999

Reminder: This week you may want to use the prayer on page 54 to bless pets.

INTRODUCTION

Today we honor Saint Francis of Assisi. Francis was rich and happy when he was growing up. But then he became very sick and he was captured in a war. His suffering made him think more about God. He decided to change his life.

So Francis gave away all his money, all his fine clothes and other things. He lived as poor as poor can be, and he became a traveling preacher and a poet.

Wherever Francis went, he asked nothing for himself. He worked for the poor, he tried to bring peace, and he showed great love for all of God's creatures. All over the world people have followed his example.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 2:4–8

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis *(JEN-uh-sis):*

When the LORD God made the heavens and the earth, no grass or plants were growing anywhere. God had not yet sent any rain, and there was no one to work the land. But streams came up from the ground and watered the earth.

The LORD God took a handful of soil and made a man. God breathed life into the man, and the man started breathing. The LORD made a garden in a place called Eden, which was in the east, and he put the man there.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In this story, breathing is the sign that a creature is living. What are other signs of life? How does the story show that human persons share God's life? Am I respectful of all of God's living creatures?

CLOSING

Psalm 139:13–16

Let us remember these intentions:

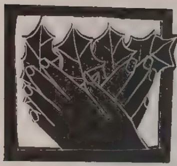
O God, you created every part of me,
knitting me in my mother's womb.
For such handiwork, I praise you.
Awesome this great wonder!
You watched every bone taking shape in secret,
forming in the hidden depths.
You saw my body grow
according to your design.
You recorded all my days
before they ever began.
Awesome this great wonder!

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

A Blessing of Pets



An image of Saint Francis can be put in a place of honor. If the blessing takes place indoors and you leave your pets at home, add photos or drawings of them to a bulletin board, prayer center or shrine. If your pets are brought from home, the blessing may take place outdoors. Always be sure to keep your pets' safety in mind.

For this blessing, one leader and two readers are needed. Begin and end with a song, such as "All creatures of our God and king" (page 100 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students).

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Let us bless the Lord,
now and for ever.

ALL
Amen.

LEADER
Animals fill the skies, the earth and the seas. They are God's beloved creatures. Saint Francis remembered this. He called the animals his brothers and sisters.

Today we ask God to bless these animals, our brothers and sisters. We thank God for letting us share the earth with such wonderful and amazing creatures.

FIRST READER Genesis 1:20–21

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

God said, "I command the ocean to be full of living creatures, and I command birds to fly above the earth." So God made the giant sea monsters and all the living creatures that swim in the ocean. He also made every kind of bird. God looked at what he had done, and it was good.

SECOND READER Genesis 1:24–25

God said, "I command the earth to give life to all kinds of tame animals, wild animals, and reptiles." And that's what happened. God made every one of them. Then he looked at what he had done, and it was good.

The word of the Lord.

LEADER
O God our creator,
everything that has the breath of life
gives you praise!

▶ hold out one hand
over the animals
in blessing, and say:

Lord, with love and compassion,
watch over our pets and all animals.
Keep them in good health.
Guard them against trouble.

May the wisdom of Saint Francis
and our love for these animals
deepen our respect for all your creation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

TUESDAY PRAYER

October 5, 1999

▶ Reminder: Thursday is the memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. Students may want to bring rosaries from home for prayer. Talk this over with the teacher.

INTRODUCTION

There are two creation stories in the first chapters of Genesis *(JEN-uh-sis)*. In one story God creates new things each day for a week. Plants are created on the third day. Humans and animals that live on land are created three days later. But in the other story, which we are reading this week, a man is created first. Then God creates trees. There are still no animals, and no women.

Each story tells of our beginnings in its own way. But in one very important way the stories are the same: It is God alone who is the creator of the world and all that it contains.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

▶ turn to page 48

READING

Genesis 2:9, 15–17

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis *(JEN-uh-sis):*

The LORD God placed all kinds of beautiful trees and fruit trees in the garden. Two other trees were in the middle of the garden. One of the trees gave life — the other gave the power to know the difference between right and wrong.

The LORD God put the man in the Garden of Eden to take care of it and to look after it. But the LORD told him, "You may eat fruit from any tree in the garden, except the one that has the power to let you know the difference between right and wrong."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What gifts has God "planted" in my life? What might the "tree of life" mean in my life? How do people take care of the world's garden?

CLOSING

Psalm 139:13–16

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, you created every part of me,
knitting me in my mother's womb.
For such handiwork, I praise you.
Awesome this great wonder!
You watched every bone taking shape in secret,
forming in the hidden depths.
You saw my body grow
according to your design.
You recorded all my days
before they ever began.
Awesome this great wonder!

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

October 6, 1999

INTRODUCTION

When we tell how something began we try to show the things that are most important about it. We have been reading a story from the book of Genesis *(JEN-uh-sis)* about the beginning of our world. On Monday and Tuesday we learned that God is the true beginning of everything, and that the world is like a garden with the tree of life at its center. We also learned that there are some rules for life in the garden.

Today's reading tells us about the ties between humans and other living creatures.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 2:18–20

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis *(JEN-uh-sis):*

The LORD God said, "It isn't good for the man to live alone. I need to make a suitable partner for him."

So the LORD took some soil and made animals and birds. He brought them to the man to see what names he would give each of them. Then the man named the tame animals and the birds and the wild animals. That's how they got their names.

But none of these was the right kind of partner for the man.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does it mean to be able to name something? What things have I named? Why does the man need a partner? What are some things that I do that require the help of a partner?

CLOSING

Psalm 139:13–16

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, you created every part of me,
  knitting me in my mother's womb.
For such handiwork, I praise you.
Awesome this great wonder!
You watched every bone taking shape in secret,
  forming in the hidden depths.
You saw my body grow
  according to your design.
You recorded all my days
  before they ever began.
Awesome this great wonder!

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

October 7, 1999

Reminder: Today you may wish to say a decade of the rosary as a closing prayer. Instructions are on page 348. An End of the Day Prayer for feasts of Mary is on page 23.

INTRODUCTION

Today we celebrate Our Lady of the Rosary. When we pray the rosary, we repeat the "Hail Mary" many times. With each set of ten "Hail Marys" that we pray, we think about a different mystery in the life of Jesus.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Luke 2:3–8

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. So Joseph had to leave Nazareth *(NAZ-uh-reth)* and go to Bethlehem *(BETH-luh-hem)*. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why is the birth of Jesus called a mystery? How did his birth change the history of the world? Why is his birth important to me?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

Mary, our mother,
  you sheltered Jesus in your own body,
  raised him with a mother's care,
  and followed him in faith.
With you, we celebrate God's saving love.

Let us all say:

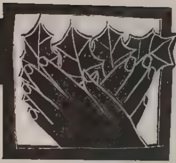
Hail Mary, full of grace,
  the Lord is with you!
Blessed are you among women,
  and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
  pray for us sinners,
  now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

repeat the "Hail Mary"
two more times

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

October 8, 1999



INTRODUCTION

Today we remember a German woman of the thirteenth century named Mechthild *(MEK-tild).* From the age of 12, Mechthild had strong experiences of God's presence. She believed that all people are meant to have the sure knowledge of God that she had. A person's age or amount of education did not matter.

Each day, Mechthild wrote about the ways God was touching her life. She explained in her journal how these "greetings from God" taught her about divine love. Many people still find comfort in reading her journal.

She spent her life with a group of women, writing, praying and being of service to people in need.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 2:21–24

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis *(JEN-uh-sis):*

The LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and he took out one of the man's ribs. Then after closing the man's side, the LORD made a woman out of the rib.

The LORD God brought her to the man, and the man exclaimed, "Here is someone like me! She is part of my body, my own flesh and bones. She came from me, a man. So I will name her Woman!"

That's why a man will leave his own father and mother. He marries a woman, and the two of them become like one person.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I know any women and men who are partners in some work? Can people ever disagree about things and still be good partners? What does this story teach us about marriage?

CLOSING

Psalm 139:13–16

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, you created every part of me,
knitting me in my mother's womb.
For such handiwork, I praise you.
Awesome this great wonder!
You watched every bone taking shape in secret,
forming in the hidden depths.
You saw my body grow
according to your design.
You recorded all my days
before they ever began.
Awesome this great wonder!

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, October 10, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Parables are stories that use symbols to teach something about life. There are many parables in the gospel of Matthew. Most of them tell about the kingdom of God. It is not easy to understand our relationship with God, so each of the parables tells something more.

We have already heard parables that compare God to a vinegrower. Today we will hear that God is like a king. This reading is taken from the gospel for Sunday, October 10.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Matthew 22:1–5, 8–10

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus used this story to teach the people:
"The kingdom of heaven is like what happened when a king gave a wedding banquet for his son. The king sent some servants to tell the invited guests to come to the banquet, but the guests refused. He sent other servants to say to the guests, 'The banquet is ready! My cattle and prize calves have all been prepared. Everything is ready. Come to the banquet!'

"But the guests did not pay any attention.

"Then the king said to the servants, 'It is time for the wedding banquet, and the invited guests don't deserve to come. Go out to the street corners and tell everyone you meet to come to the banquet.'

"They went out on the streets and brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike. And the banquet room was filled with guests."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What are some of the ways that God invites people into the kingdom? Who are the servants in this story? How do we participate in God's "wedding banquet" now?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
you are faithful to your promises.
You give us daily bread and more besides.
Teach us to be grateful for what we have
and to rejoice in the good fortune of others.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

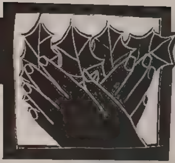
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

October 11, 1999



INTRODUCTION

Today we remember the landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas. Every year we honor this brave admiral who sailed where people from Europe had never gone before. The people who sailed with him and who followed were looking for a place to start a new life. Many people still come to the Americas.

When people from different places come together, sometimes there is trouble. People have different ideas and different customs. Many years ago the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians in the city of Ephesus *(EF-uh-sus)* were not getting along. Today we will hear what Saint Paul wrote to them.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Ephesians 2:14, 19–22

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Christ has made peace between Jews and Gentiles, and he has united us by breaking down the wall of hatred that separated us.

You Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners *(FOR-in-erz)*. You are citizens with everyone else who belongs to the family of God. You are like a building with the apostles and prophets as the foundation and with Christ as the most important stone. Christ is the one who holds the building together and makes it grow into a holy temple for the Lord. And you are part of that building Christ has built as a place for God's own Spirit to live.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why do some people think they are better than people of other races or groups? Is my school a place where all groups work well together? Is there prejudice in my heart against anyone?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
 heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
 filled with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

October 12, 1999

INTRODUCTION

The book of Genesis *(JEN-uh-sis)* tells of the beginning of the earth and the beginning of the human race. Today we will hear about the beginning of sin.

Long ago, people believed that evil gods had power over human beings and could cause bad things to happen. The Hebrew storyteller reminds us that there is only one God. God is good and does not make evil. Listen to the story and find out where evil comes from.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

▶ turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 3:1–3, 4–5, 5–7

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

The snake was sneakier than any of the other wild animals that the LORD God had made. One day it came to the woman and asked, "Did God tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?"

The woman answered, "God said we could eat fruit from any tree in the garden, except the one in the middle. He told us not to eat fruit from that tree or even to touch it."

The snake replied, "God understands what will happen on the day you eat fruit from that tree. You will know the difference between right and wrong, just as God does."

The woman stared at the fruit. It looked beautiful and tasty. She wanted the wisdom that it would give her, and she ate some of the fruit. Her husband was there with her, so she gave some to him, and he ate it too. Right away they saw what they had done.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What are some of the things in this world that look "beautiful and tasty" but are forbidden? Do I sometimes want to decide for myself what is right and what is wrong? Am I sometimes tempted to act smart rather than be obedient?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God our creator,
  you give us your law as a gift
  and not a burden.
It guides us to live in peace with you,
  with each other,
  and within ourselves.
Help us to keep your law with all our hearts.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

October 13, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians take some time in the evening to pray, speaking to God about the events of their day. They try to remember any evil or hurtful things that they have done, and ask God's pardon. They think about why they acted badly, and what they can do to repair any harm they might have caused. In this way they grow in understanding, and they go to bed with excitement for the new day to come.

In today's reading God speaks to the man and the woman in the garden. It is late in the afternoon, and it is time for them to face what they have done.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to page 48

READING

Genesis 3:8–9, 11–13, 23

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

Late in the afternoon a breeze began to blow, and the man and woman heard the Lord God walking in the garden. They were frightened and hid behind some trees.

The Lord called out to the man and asked, "Did you eat any fruit from that tree in the middle of the garden?"

"It was the woman you put here with me," the man said. "She gave me some of the fruit, and I ate it."

The Lord God then asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The snake tricked me," she answered. "And I ate some of that fruit."

So the Lord God sent them out of the Garden to a place where they would have to work the ground from which the man had been made.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why do we try to hide when we have done something wrong? Why do we sometimes blame something or someone else for what we do?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God our creator,
  you give us your law as a gift
  and not a burden.
It guides us to live in peace with you,
  with each other,
  and within ourselves.
Help us to keep your law with all our hearts.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

October 14, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today's reading tells about the first man and woman's two oldest children, Cain and Abel. Although they were brothers, things were not always loving or even friendly between them. Cain was jealous of Abel, and wanted the praise that Abel was given.

It is not unusual for brothers and sisters to want each other's toys or talents or attention. Growing up in the same family can sometimes be hard. God understands this, and wants to help us learn to act toward our brothers and sisters with love, respect and friendship.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 4:2–7

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

Abel became a sheep farmer, but Cain farmed the land. One day, Cain gave part of his harvest to the LORD, and Abel also gave an offering to the LORD. He killed the first-born lamb from one of his sheep and gave the LORD the best parts of it. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, but not with Cain and his offering. This made Cain so angry that he could not hide his feelings.

The LORD said to Cain, "What's wrong with you? Why do you have such an angry look on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But you did the wrong thing, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don't let it!"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why is Cain upset and angry? Does this story seem fair? How does God warn people that they are allowing sin to attack them? How does doing something wrong sometimes lead us to do something else wrong?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God our creator,
  you give us your law as a gift
  and not a burden.
It guides us to live in peace with you,
  with each other,
  and within ourselves.
Help us to keep your law with all our hearts.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

October 15, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Teresa of Jesus, a Carmelite *(KAR-muh-lite)* sister in the town of Avila *(AHV-ih-lah)* in Spain. Teresa wrote many excellent books about God and the life of prayer. She died in 1582.

Four hundred years later, Teresa was named a "doctor of the church." The word "doctor" can mean "wise teacher," which is what Teresa was.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 4:8–10, 11–12, 13, 14–15

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go for a walk." And when they were out in a field, Cain killed him.

Afterwards the Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"How should I know?" he answered. "Am I supposed to look after my brother?"

Then the Lord said, "Why have you done this terrible thing? You killed your own brother, and his blood flowed onto the ground. Because you killed Abel and made his blood run out on the ground, you will never be able to farm the land again. If you try to farm the land, it won't produce anything for you."

"This punishment is too hard!" Cain said. "I will have to wander about without a home, and just anyone could kill me."

"No!" the Lord answered. "Anyone who kills you will be punished seven times worse than I am punishing you." So the Lord put a mark on Cain to warn everyone not to kill him.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does this story tell us about anger and jealousy among brothers and sisters? What does it tell us about murder? How can I do a better job of looking after my brothers and sisters?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God our creator,
 you give us your law as a gift
 and not a burden.
It guides us to live in peace with you,
 with each other,
 and within ourselves.
Help us to keep your law with all our hearts.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, October 17, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today's reading tells us about the Pharisees *(FAIR-ih-seez)*. They were Jews who followed the law of Moses very strictly. Some of the Pharisees thought that Jesus was teaching disrespect for God's law.

In the gospels it sometimes seems as if all the Pharisees were against Jesus. But in fact, some were friends of Jesus. We should not blame all of them for what a few people did.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Matthew 22:15–16, 16–21

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

The Pharisees *(FAIR-ih-seez)* got together and planned how they could trick Jesus into saying something wrong. They sent some of their followers to say to him, "Teacher, we know that you are honest. You teach the truth about what God wants people to do. And you treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are. Tell us what you think! Should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?"

Jesus knew their evil thoughts and said, "Why are you trying to test me? You show-offs! Let me see one of the coins used for paying taxes."

They brought him a silver coin, and he asked, "Whose picture and name are on it?"

"The Emperor's," they answered.

Then Jesus told them, "Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I give my parents and my teachers what belongs to them? What do I have that I should give to God? The coin belongs to the Emperor because it has his picture on it. Where do I see God's image?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
  Creator of the universe,
  you fill the world with your glory
  and give it to us as a home.
Teach us to recognize its wonders,
  to treasure its variety,
  and to protect its fragile beauty.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

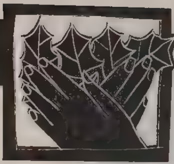
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

October 18, 1999



INTRODUCTION

Today Christians celebrate the feast of Luke the evangelist *(ee-VAN-jel-ist)*. Luke wrote the third gospel and the book called the Acts of the Apostles. He was a doctor, and some people think he was also an artist. Luke traveled with Saint Paul and brought the good news of Jesus to people of many nations.

Our reading today is taken from a letter Paul wrote from prison to the bishop Timothy. Paul gives Timothy news of those who are with him in Rome. He mentions his good friend Luke.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

2 Timothy 4:9–10, 10–11, 13, 16–17, 18

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Come to see me as soon as you can. Demas *(DEE-mas)* loves the things of this world so much that he left me. Crescens *(KREE-shens)* has gone to Galatia *(guh-LAY-shuh)*, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia *(dahl-MAY-shuh)*. Only Luke has stayed with me.

Mark can be very helpful to me, so please find him and bring him with you. When you come, bring the coat I left with Carpus. Don't forget to bring the scrolls, especially the ones made of leather.

When I was first put on trial, no one helped me. In fact, everyone deserted me. I hope it won't be held against them. But the Lord stood beside me. He gave me the strength to tell his full message, so that all Gentiles would hear it. The Lord will always keep me from being harmed by evil, and he will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. Praise him forever and ever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Was it harder to be a Christian in the early days than it is now? Is there anyone who would stand by me the way Luke stood by Paul? Do I stand by my friends?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Divine Wisdom,
  the writings of Saint Luke
  bring us closer to you.
Help us to understand the Bible
  better and better each day.
Let your word, like good seed,
  take root in our hearts,
  and bear fruit in our lives.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

October 19, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember eight French missionaries who came to North America about 350 years ago. They were killed for preaching the gospel. Two of them were Isaac *(EYE-zik)* Jogues and John de Brébeuf *(bray-BUFF)*.

Even now, Christians often risk danger to preach the gospel. Let us pray for missionaries around the world today.

Today we begin to read about the couple Abram and Sarai *(SAIR-eye)*, whose names were later changed to Abraham and Sarah. They too were called by God to leave their home and family to travel to a new land.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 12:1–2, 3, 4–5

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

The LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country, your family, and your relatives, and go to the land that I will show you. I will bless you and make your descendants into a great nation. You will become famous and you will be a blessing to others. Everyone on earth will be blessed because of you."

Abram obeyed and left with his wife Sarai *(SAIR-eye)*, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions and slaves they had.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I know anyone who left home to follow God's call? How might it have felt when they left home? What will it be like when I grow up and leave home? Will God prepare a place for me to go?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
Let us pray for those who need God's help.

For people who go where the Lord sends them,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who bring God's message to others,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who travel to find a good job,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Loving God, have mercy on all your people.
Keep us close to your heart.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

October 20, 1999

INTRODUCTION

In the time of Abram and Sarai *(SAIR-eye)* people honored many gods. Sometimes the gods seemed kind, but at other times they were angry and jealous. Because the gods seemed changeable, people could never be certain how to keep them happy.

When Abram and Sarai came to know the one true God, they learned that God was trustworthy and loving. They put their faith in God and in God's promises. That is why Abram's name was changed to Abraham, which means "father." He is the father of all who believe in the Lord God.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 15:1–2, 2–6

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

The LORD spoke to Abram in a vision, "Abram, don't be afraid! I will protect you and reward you greatly."

But Abram answered, "LORD All-Powerful, you have given me everything I could ask for, except children. And when I die, Eliezer *(el-ee-AY-zer)* will get all I own. You have not given me any children, and this servant of mine will inherit everything."

The LORD replied, "No, he won't! You will have a son of your own, and everything you have will be his." Then the LORD took Abram outside and said, "Look at the sky and see if you can count the stars. That's how many descendants you will have."

Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD was pleased with him.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What promises has God made to our community or to me? Is my belief in God's promises strong?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
Let us pray for those who need God's help.

For people who want to have children,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who believe in God's promises,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who keep their promises,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Loving God, have mercy on all your people.
Keep us close to your heart.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

October 21, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we honor the martyr Ursula *(ER-soo-luh)*. She died for her faith in the fourth century. People said that eleven thousand girls died with her, but that could not possibly be true! Some stories about the saints are made up, but they can still inspire us.

Today's reading tells more about Abram and Sarai *(SAIR-eye)*. They lived many years alone, even though God promised that they would have children.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

➧ turn to page 48

READING

Genesis 16:1–2, 3, 4, 6–7, 9–11, 15–16

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

Sarai *(SAIR-eye)* owned a young Egyptian slave woman named Hagar *(HAY-gar)*, and Sarai said to Abram, "The Lord has not given me any children." And so Sarai gave him Hagar to be his wife.

Later, when Hagar knew she was going to have a baby, she became proud and was hateful to Sarai. But Sarai began treating Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

Hagar stopped to rest at a spring in the desert. While she was there, the angel of the Lord came to her and said, "Go back to Sarai and be her slave. I will give you a son, who will be called Ishmael *(ISH-may-el)*, because I have heard your cry for help. And later I will give you so many descendants that no one will be able to count them all."

Hagar gave birth to their son, and Abram named him Ishmael.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Is it surprising that Sarai and Hagar argued? Do people I know argue? How do they make up?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
Let us pray for those who need God's help.

For people who want to have children,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who are pregnant,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who live in families,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Loving God, have mercy on all your people.
Keep us close to your heart.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

October 22, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Do you remember the legend of Saint Ursula *(ER-soo-luh)* from yesterday? Today we honor the martyr Cordula *(KOR-jew-luh)*, one of Ursula's companions. Cordula refused to die for her faith, so she was not killed with the other girls. But the next day she changed her mind. This legend teaches that even people who are sometimes cowardly can become saints.

Today we continue the story of Abram and Sarai *(SAIR-eye)*, who are now called Abraham and Sarah. After many years of waiting and trusting in the Lord's promise, their prayers are finally answered.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 21:1–3, 6–7

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

The Lord was good to Sarah and kept his promise. Although Abraham was very old, Sarah had a son exactly at the time God had said. Abraham named his son Isaac *(EYE-zik)*.

Sarah said, "God has made me laugh. Now everyone will laugh with me. Who would have dared to tell Abraham that someday I would have a child? But in his old age, I have given him a son."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Abraham and Sarah laugh with joy over the birth of their son. Do I ever make my parents laugh? The name Isaac means "laughter." What does my name mean?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
Let us pray for those who need God's help.

For people who teach us stories of our faith,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who are hoping to have children,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who need loving parents,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Loving God, have mercy on all your people.
Keep us close to your heart.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, October 24, 1999

■ INTRODUCTION

Laws are very important. Laws protect people. They tell us, for example, that we may not drive at a dangerous speed. But laws do not just tell us what we may not do. They also point out the things that are good and important. The speed limits, for example, teach us that safety is more important than speed. They teach us to drive with care.

When we understand the meaning of laws, we are more able to follow family rules, school rules and the laws of our nation. We are more able to follow the law of God. We can also begin to understand today's reading. It is taken from the gospel for Sunday, October 24.

■ A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

▶ turn to
page 48

■ READING

Matthew 22:35–40

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

An expert in the Jewish Law tried to test Jesus by asking, "Teacher, what is the most important commandment in the Law?"

Jesus answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.' This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, 'Love others as much as you love yourself.' All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments."

The gospel of the Lord.

■ REFLECTION

There are many rules in life. The most important rules are the two in the reading today. Do we know them by heart? How well am I keeping them? How do the rules of my family and my school help me keep the two great commandments of Jesus?

■ CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of the Law and the prophets,
you give us your law as a gift
and not a burden.
It guides us to live in peace with you,
with each other,
and within ourselves.
Help us to keep your law with all our hearts.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

October 25, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Abraham and Sarah have a young son, Isaac *(EYE-zik)*. Jews and Christians trace their faith through his family. Today we learn more about Hagar and Abraham's first son, Ishmael *(ISH-may-el)*. Through the family of Ishmael, Muslims trace their faith back to Abraham.

The name Abraham means "father." Jews, Christian and Muslims call Abraham their father in faith. That makes all of us one family. But today's reading teaches us that Abraham's family can suffer from quarrels and jealousy.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

▶ turn to
page 48

READING

Genesis 21:9–14

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis:

One day, Sarah noticed Hagar's son Ishmael *(ISH-may-el)* playing, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that Egyptian slave woman and her son! I don't want him to inherit anything. It should all go to my son."

Abraham was worried about Ishmael. But God said, "Abraham, don't worry about your slave woman and the boy. Just do what Sarah tells you. Isaac *(EYE-zik)* will inherit your family name, but the son of the slave woman is also your son, and I will make his descendants into a great nation."

Early the next morning Abraham gave Hagar an animal skin full of water and some bread. Then he put the boy on her shoulder and sent them away.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What caused this family to break up? What causes some people today to become refugees or homeless? Do I ask God to help heal the problems in my family?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
Let us pray for those who need God's help.

For people who are hurt by family members,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who struggle to feed their children,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For people who try to be fair to everyone,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Loving God, have mercy on all your people.
Keep us close to your heart.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

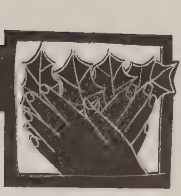
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

October 26, 1999



Reminder: November begins on Monday. You may want to make copies of November's Psalm, Meal Prayer, and End of the Day Prayer, found on pages 82 to 84.

INTRODUCTION

We are preparing to celebrate the feast of All Saints on Monday. Our readings this week teach us what it means to be a saint.

Some Christians follow Jesus so well and give themselves to his work with so much generosity that we call them "saints." The church wants us to learn about them and follow their example.

We are not supposed to do exactly what the saints did, because each of us has a unique *(you-NEEK)* life to live. But we can try to copy their enthusiasm for God and the love they showed to the people around them.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

I Corinthians 1:2–9

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Christ Jesus chose you to be his very own people, and you worship in his name, as we and all others do who call him Lord.

My prayer is that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will be kind to you and will bless you with peace!

I never stop thanking my God for being kind enough to give you Christ Jesus, who helps you speak and understand so well. Now you are certain that everything we told you about our Lord Christ Jesus is true. You are not missing out on any blessings, as you wait for him to return. And until the day Christ does return, he will keep you completely innocent. God can be trusted, and he chose you to be partners with his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Saint Paul wrote that God chose us to be partners with Jesus. What am I doing to help the work of Jesus? Are my friends helping me to follow Jesus? Do I put my trust in God?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of grace and wisdom,
you continually raise up good people
who show with their lives
that they follow a holy and loving God.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

October 27, 1999

INTRODUCTION

On this day in 1466, Desiderius Erasmus *(day-sih-DAY-ree-us ee-RAZ-muss)* was born in Holland. He became a priest and traveled to many countries studying, preaching and writing.

Erasmus used his learning and his sense of humor to wake up people who were false or lazy Christians. He tried to make peace between people who wanted to reform the church and others who wanted the reformers condemned and punished. Erasmus urged all to be calm, open and loving when they discussed the faith of the church. It broke his heart to see the church divided when Jesus had prayed that all might be one.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

I Corinthians 1:30–2:5

Listen to a reading from the apostle Paul:

You are God's children. He sent Christ Jesus to save us and to make us wise, acceptable, and holy. So if you want to brag, do what the Scriptures say and brag about the Lord.

Friends, when I came and told you the mystery that God had shared with us, I didn't use big words or try to sound wise. In fact, while I was with you, I made up my mind to speak only about Jesus Christ, who had been nailed to a cross.

At first, I was weak and trembling with fear. When I talked with you or preached, I didn't try to prove anything by sounding wise. I simply let God's Spirit show his power. That way you would have faith because of God's power and not because of human wisdom.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I sometimes brag about things I have done? How do we let God make us wise and holy? What is holiness?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

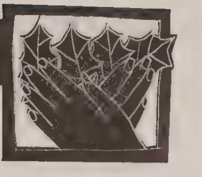
God of grace and wisdom,
  you continually raise up good people
  who show with their lives
  that they follow a holy and loving God.
Let our lives be as true as our faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER



October 28, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today is the feast of two apostles, Simon the Zealot *(ZELL-ut)* or “eager one,” and Jude Thaddaeus *(THAD-ee-us)*. Zealots work wildly for a cause. They have little balance and are not very cautious. Simon may have been called a zealot because he belonged to the political party called the Zealots, or maybe he was just enthusiastic about doing God’s work.

Thaddaeus means “brave.” This nickname tells us that Jude did brave things for Jesus. It also keeps us from mixing up Jude Thaddaeus with Judas Iscariot *(is-KA-ree-ut)*, the traitor.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

➧ turn to
page 48

READING

Mark 3:13–19

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus decided to ask some of his disciples to go up on a mountain with him, and they went. Then he chose twelve of them to be his apostles, so that they could be with him. Jesus also wanted to send them out to preach and to force out demons.

Simon was one of the twelve, and Jesus named him Peter. There were also James and John, the two sons of Zebedee. Jesus called them “Thunderbolts.” Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus *(al-FAY-us)*, and Thaddaeus *(THAD-ee-us)* were also apostles. The others were Simon, known as the Eager One, and Judas Iscariot *(is-KA-ree-ut)*, who later betrayed Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The word “apostle” means “someone sent on a mission.” Why is it important to know the names and stories of the apostles? Who are some people today who are like apostles? In what ways can I act like an apostle?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God, we thank you for sending apostles
to the whole world.
We welcome those who bring your good news.
We pray for them and listen to their teaching.
Call on us, one day, to become apostles, too.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

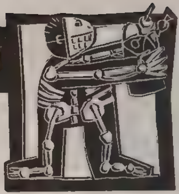
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing
“alleluia”

FRIDAY PRAYER

October 29, 1999



Reminder: If you are planning a Halloween celebration, you might use the blessing on page 78.

INTRODUCTION

Sunday night is Halloween! The word "hallow" is another word for a saint, a holy person. So the night before All Saints' Day is called "All Hallows' Eve," or Halloween.

On Halloween some of the rules of life change a bit. Instead of ordinary clothes, we wear costumes. We can play the part of saints or heroes or people with special talents. We can play funny tricks and ask neighbors for treats. We also change the rules of fear. We laugh at things that scare us — spooks, skeletons and slimy things that go "boo!" They cannot separate us from Jesus and the joy of his resurrection.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to
page 48

READING

1 John 3:1–3

Listen to the words of the first letter of John:

Think how much the Father loves us. He loves us so much that he lets us be called his children, as we truly are. But since the people of this world did not know who Christ is, they don't know who we are.

My dear friends, we are already God's children, though what we will be hasn't yet been seen. But we do know that when Christ returns, we will be like him, because we will see him as he truly is. This hope makes us keep ourselves holy, just as Christ is holy.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I look like members of my family? Do I have a "family likeness" with Jesus? Do I feel as comfortable with God as I do with my mother and father? Do I try to be holy as Jesus is holy?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all harvests and all happiness,
  we thank you for the festival of All Saints,
  for saints to befriend us
    and teach us the way of the gospel,
  for apples and raisins and Halloween candy,
  for stories and costumes and celebrations,
  for families who love us and keep us safe.
Keep our hearts always open
  to those who need us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

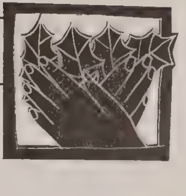
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With the Second Reading for Sunday, October 31, 1999



Reminder: A Halloween blessing is on page 78. You may want to make copies of the Psalm for November, found on page 82.

INTRODUCTION

Today we will hear the second reading for Sunday, October 31. It comes from a letter written by Saint Paul to the Christians of Thessalonika *(THES-suh-LON-nik-kuh)*.

Paul and other preachers worked at jobs in order to support themselves. Paul tells the people about this because some of them had quit their jobs and were just sitting in their back yards doing nothing. They expected Jesus to return any day. So why work? But Paul reminds them that he and the other preachers worked hard to spread the good news about Jesus.

A PSALM FOR OCTOBER

turn to page 48

READING

I Thessalonians 2:8–9, 13

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Brothers and sisters, we cared so much for you, and you became so dear to us, that we were willing to give our lives for you when we gave you God's message.

My dear friends, you surely haven't forgotten our hard work and hardships. You remember how night and day we struggled to make a living, so that we could tell you God's message without being a burden to anyone.

We always thank God that you believed the message we preached. It came from him, and it isn't something made up by humans. You accepted it as God's message, and now he is working in you.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I do my share at home? Do I help my friends? Do I appreciate the gift of faith? Do I appreciate those who share the message of Jesus with me?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all harvests and all happiness,
 we thank you for the festival of All Saints,
 for saints to befriend us
  and teach us the way of the gospel,
 for apples and raisins and Halloween candy,
 for stories and costumes and celebrations,
 for families who love us and keep us safe.
Keep our hearts always open
 to those who need us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"

A Blessing for Halloween

This is an appropriate beginning for a Halloween or All Saints' Day party, or for a parade of costumes. During the procession, sing "When the saints go marchin' in" or "Sing with all the saints in glory" (Hymnal for Catholic Students, *page 184). Music for "Great is the Lord" is in the hymnal on page 61.*

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Great is the Lord, worthy of praise!

ALL
Tell all the nations, "God is King";
spread the news of God's love.

LEADER Psalm 96:1–3
A new song for the Lord!
Sing it and bless God's name,
everyone, everywhere!
Tell the whole world
God's triumph day to day,
God's glory, God's wonder.
Great is the Lord, worthy of praise!

ALL
Tell all the nations, "God is King";
spread the news of God's love.

READER Revelation 7:13–14, 17
Listen to the words of the book of Revelation:

One of the elders asked me, "Do you know who these people are that are dressed in white robes? Do you know where they come from?"
"Sir," I answered, "you must know."
Then he told me:

"These are the ones
who have gone through the great suffering.
They have washed their robes
in the blood of the Lamb
and have made them white.
The Lamb in the center of the throne
will be their shepherd.
He will lead them to streams
of life-giving water,
and God will wipe all tears
from their eyes."

The word of the Lord.

LEADER

➧ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May God be ever before us,
leading the procession of saints.
May God be at our side
as a companion on our journey.
May God be at the center,
the source of our joy and celebration.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

LEADER
Great is the Lord, worthy of praise!

ALL
Tell all the nations, "God is King";
spread the news of God's love.

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

NOVEMBER

Monday, November 1, to Wednesday, November 24

ORDINARY TIME
NOVEMBER 1999

ABOUT THE MONTH

LOOKING AHEAD

In most parts of the country, November is the month when the earth closes itself up for the winter. Grass turns brown. Trees give up their last leaves and hold dark, empty branches up to the sky. There are many bright, crisp days, but nature gradually turns down the heat. By the end of the month, many of us will definitely need our cold-weather clothes.

Long ago, families had to gather and store enough food to last through the winter. Some people still have to do this. This is hard on people who live where the crops have not been good and who live in climates where winter is long and harsh. The food they store might not be enough. They might run out of firewood, or a blizzard might kill the farm animals. It is easy to see why in November people's thoughts turn to death.

▪ NOVEMBER BEGINS WITH A DOUBLE FEAST IN REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED. The saints, people whom God has "harvested" into heaven, are remembered on November 1, All Saints' Day. Many members of our own families have died. They also are part of God's "harvest." We pray for them on November 2, All Souls' Day. During these days, we pray that one day all people will share the glory of the saints.

All through the month, we offer prayers to remember the dead and to thank God for the harvest. We also ask God to provide enough for the poor of the world. We offer prayers of intercession for those who suffer most: the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the jobless.

▪ AT DAILY PRAYER, MOST OF OUR READINGS ARE TAKEN FROM THE BOOK OF EXODUS. This book tells the story of Moses—the greatest prophet, hero and leader of Israel. God chose Moses to win freedom for the Hebrew people, who were enslaved and suffering in Egypt. Moses then led them during their many years in the desert, where God made a covenant with them. The events of this Passover and exodus formed the people of Israel into a nation.

During the last days of November, both Hebrew and Christian writers urge us to share the gifts that God gives us. These readings help prepare us all for Thanksgiving.

PREPARATION FOR NOVEMBER

If you do not use *Blessed Be God!* you may want to make copies of the Psalm for November and the Meal and End of the Day Prayers. They are found on pages 82, 83 and 84.

▪ ALL SAINTS' DAY AND ALL SOULS' DAY FALL ON THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF THE MONTH. If the school celebrates the eucharist on either of these days you may want to skip Daily Prayer or shorten it. Because it falls on a Monday this year, All Saints' Day is not a holy day of obligation. On page 86 there is a special prayer for your family members and friends who have died. You can use it on any day during November. The same prayer is on page 47 *in Blessed Be God!* which you can share with your families.

▪ MANY PEOPLE ARRANGE A SHRINE TO HONOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED. In Japan, people burn incense on these shrines. In Mexico, where All Souls' Day is called "The Day of the Dead" *(El Día de los Muertos)*, shrines are often elaborately decorated with symbols of death and resurrection. Some symbols are beans, corn, pumpkins, gourds, bread, the crucifix, the paschal candle, candy skulls, skeletons in bright party clothes, the tree of life made of wood or papier-mâché, miniature scenes from daily life, and lots of real or paper flowers.

A shrine can be as simple as a candle and a list of people you want to remember. Or you can bring

pictures, memorial cards or drawings of people you want to pray for, along with harvest symbols (such as jack-o'-lanterns).

▪ DURING NOVEMBER MANY PEOPLE COLLECT CLOTHING, FOOD OR MONEY FOR THE POOR. If your school or parish does this, you may want to place the things you collect near your prayer center. These gifts really help other people. At the same time, they also represent the way we should care all year long about the poor, the hungry and the homeless people of the world.

If you bring together gifts for others, you may want to bless them before sending them out for Thanksgiving. A Blessing of Gifts is on page 350. There is also a Thanksgiving prayer on page 108. You can combine the Prayer for Thanksgiving with the Blessing of Gifts or the Blessing of Food for Sharing (page 351).

▪ ARE YOU KEEPING A FEW MINUTES OF SILENCE AFTER THE READING EACH DAY? It takes time for the words of the Bible to sink deeply into our hearts and to take root there. Without roots, even a little breeze can blow a tree down. If God's word is well-rooted in our hearts, it can grow strong.

▪ SUGGESTED HYMNS: "Sing with all the saints in glory" (page 184 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) uses the melody for Beethoven's "Hymn to Joy." Other great songs to sing from Halloween until Thanksgiving include "Come, ye thankful people, come" (page 116 in the hymnal) and "Now thank we all our God" (page 158 in the hymnal).

"What wondrous love is this" (page 208 in the hymnal) can be sung to help us remember the dead. This song was begun long ago by the people of the Appalachian Mountains. People taught it by heart to their children. When these children grew up, they taught it to their children too. This is a good song for November, which is American Music Month.

▪ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Readings for Weekly Prayer are from the Sunday gospel. During November the readings reflect the church's focus on the "last things," that is, death and judgment. The parables of the wise and foolish girls and the wise and foolish investors teach us to take responsibility for being ready when the Lord comes. Sunday, November 21, is the feast of Christ the King. The reading that day is Matthew's vision of the day of judgment, which ends the church's year and prepares us for Advent.

You may want to celebrate the special days of November by using Daily Prayer on those days instead of Weekly Prayer: November 1 and 2 are All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. The prayers for November 22, 23, and 24, as well as the prayer on page 108, focus on Thanksgiving.

▪ YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE A SHRINE TO REMEMBER RELATIVES WHO HAVE DIED. In doing this, you might join the day-school students who also use your classroom. Your teachers can talk this over and see what kinds of symbols you can bring.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

Psalm 65:2, 5, 10 – 12

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Blessed be the name of the Lord:
ALL **Now and for ever.**
LEADER Praise is yours, God in Zion.
ALL **Fill us with the plenty of your house.**
SIDE A You tend and water the land.
How wonderful the harvest!
SIDE B You fill your springs,
ready the seeds, prepare the grain.
SIDE A With softening rain
you bless the land with growth.
SIDE B You crown the year with riches.
All you touch comes alive.
LEADER Praise is yours, God in Zion.
ALL **Fill us with the plenty of your house.**
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

▶ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

NOVEMBER

MEAL PRAYER

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make the sign of the cross

LEADER Blessed be the name of the Lord:
ALL **Now and for ever.**
LEADER Loving God,
all that we have
comes from your goodness
and the work of those who love us.
Bless us and the food we share.
Watch over those who care for us.
Open our eyes to the needs of the poor
during this time of harvest
and thanksgiving.
We make our prayer in the name of Jesus,
who is Lord for ever and ever.
ALL **Amen.**

▶ the melody for this song is found in many hymnals:

Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
Who, from our mother's arms,
has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today. Amen.

▶ all make the sign of the cross

NOVEMBER

END OF THE DAY PRAYER

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Blessed be the name of the Lord:
ALL **Now and for ever.**
LEADER May all the saints look after us
and lead us safely home.
May they guide our steps in goodness,
befriend us in loneliness,
refresh us in weariness,
and strengthen us in danger.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
who is our Way, our Truth and our Life,
now and for ever.
ALL **Amen.**

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the almighty and merciful God
bless and protect us:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

Litany of the Saints

the leader's part is in the left-hand column;
the responses are in the right-hand column.

Lord, have mercy.	**Lord, have mercy.**
Christ, have mercy.	**Christ, have mercy.**
Lord, have mercy.	**Lord, have mercy.**
Holy Mary, Mother of God,	**pray for us.**
Saint Michael,	**pray for us.**
Holy angels of God,	**pray for us.**
Saint Abraham and Saint Sarah,	**pray for us.**
Saint Isaac and Saint Rebekah,	**pray for us.**
Saint John the Baptist,	**pray for us.**
Saint Joseph,	**pray for us.**
Saint Peter and Saint Paul,	**pray for us.**
Saint Mary Magdalene,	**pray for us.**
Saint Stephen,	**pray for us.**
Saint Agnes,	**pray for us.**
Saint Martin,	**pray for us.**
Saint Margaret,	**pray for us.**
Saint Catherine,	**pray for us.**
Saint Benedict,	**pray for us.**
Saint Francis,	**pray for us.**
Saint Clare,	**pray for us.**
Saint Dominic,	**pray for us.**
Saint Theresa,	**pray for us.**
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton,	**pray for us.**

other names of saints
may be added

All holy men and women,	**pray for us.**

the Litany of the Saints
concludes with
this prayer:

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God,
and we honor all your holy ones.

We ask the help of those men and women
who struggled against evil and stood firm,
who loved one another,
who worked for justice and peace,
who healed the sick and fed the hungry.

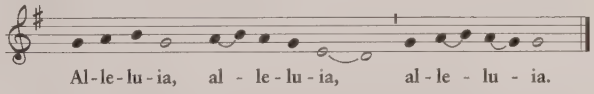
We on earth and they in heaven
sing one song of praise.
We in grace and they in glory
form one communion in Christ, your Son.

Make us and all those we love
worthy to be called your saints.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"



A Prayer for the Dead

This is an order of prayer for friends and relatives who have died. It is also on page 47 in Blessed Be God! *This prayer can be used at any time, especially during the month of November.*

There is information on pages 80 and 81 about making a November shrine with pictures, names and symbols of people you wish to remember. If you have a shrine, gather around it.

Open and close with a song, such as "What wondrous love is this" (page 208 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students).

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Blessed be God,
who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever.

ALL
Blessed be God for ever.

LEADER
In silence, let us take a few moments now
to remember the dead.

stop; allow a minute or so of silence,
and then say:

Lord God, whose days are without end
and whose mercies beyond counting,
keep us mindful that life is short
and the hour of death unknown.
Let your Spirit guide our days on earth
in the ways of holiness and justice,
that we may serve you
in union with the whole church,
sure in faith, strong in hope,
perfected in love.
And when our earthly journey is ended,
lead us rejoicing into your kingdom,
where you live for ever and ever.

ALL
Amen.

LEADER
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

ALL
And let perpetual light shine upon them.

LEADER
May they rest in peace.

ALL
Amen.

LEADER
May their souls
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

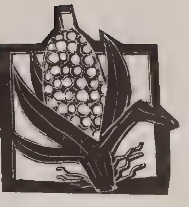
ALL
Amen.

all make
the sign
of the cross

adapted from *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*

MONDAY PRAYER

November 1, 1999



Reminder: The Closing is the Litany of the Saints, on page 85. November's Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer are on pages 12 to 14 of *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

Today is All Saints' Day, the first of a two-day celebration of the saints and all who have died. November is a time of harvest and the beginning of the earth's winter sleep. This time of year sometimes turns people's thoughts to those who have fallen asleep in death. And so today we celebrate the communion of saints—the union of prayer and love between saints on earth (perhaps you and me) and the saints in heaven.

Some saints are famous. Their names are in prayer books and their pictures are in the newspaper or on the walls and windows of churches. Their stories teach us that there are many ways to follow Christ.

Today all the saints, both living and dead, join hands and sing one song of praise to God.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Revelation 7:9–10, 13–14

Listen to the words of the book of Revelation:

I saw a large crowd with more people than could be counted. They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb. They wore white robes and held palm branches in their hands, as they shouted,

“Our God, who sits upon the throne,
has the power to save his people,
and so does the Lamb.”

One of the elders asked me, “Do you know who these people are that are dressed in white robes? Do you know where they come from?”

“Sir,” I answered, “you must know.”

Then he told me, “These are the ones who have gone through the great suffering. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and have made them white.”

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What might the saints' robes represent? When do people wear special clothing? Which saints do I really admire and follow as an example? Which saints does my family honor?

CLOSING

Let us now keep silence,
while we let the word of God
sink down into our hearts.

be quiet for half a minute or more; then begin the Litany of the Saints, found on the page 85

TUESDAY PRAYER

November 2, 1999

Reminders: The Closing is the Litany of the Saints, on page 85. A prayer for relatives and friends who have died is on page 86 of this book and on page 47 of *Blessed Be God!* This can be used today or any day during November. Talk this over with the teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Today is All Souls' Day, the second day of our remembrance of saints. Today we remember our relatives and friends who have died.

Many of them are not famous. Their statues are not in the church, but their pictures are in our homes. And their stories may be alive in our families. We know of their goodness and their struggles. We know that they were not perfect, but that they tried to do their best. We pray for them, and we remember them with love.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

John 11:17, 20–27

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

When Jesus got to Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she went out to meet him. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Yet even now I know that God will do anything you ask."

Jesus told her, "Your brother will live again!" Martha answered, "I know that he will be raised to life on the last day, when all the dead are raised."

Jesus then said, "I am the one who raises the dead to life! Everyone who has faith in me will live, even if they die. And everyone who lives because of faith in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord!" she replied. "I believe that you are Christ, the Son of God. You are the one we hoped would come into the world."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Martha's faith is a model for every Christian. How does my family keep alive the memory of its dead members? What are the sad things about death? What are the happy things about death and about remembering the dead?

CLOSING

Let us now keep silence,
while we let the word of God
sink down into our hearts.

be quiet for half a minute or more;
then begin the Litany of the Saints,
on page 85

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

November 3, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Martin de Porres *(dee-POUR-rez),* who died in 1639 in Peru.

Martin's father was Spanish and his mother was African. When he was twelve, he learned to be a barber. In those days, barbers treated many kinds of illnesses. So Martin learned to cure toothaches as well as to cut hair. He became known for his care of the sick and the poor and for his good works. He is a patron of social action and of race relations because he loved people of all races. In honor of Martin, we will read a teaching about the love of God.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

1 John 4:17–21

Listen to the words of the first letter of John:

If we truly love others and live as Christ did in this world, we won't be worried about the day of judgment. A real love for others will chase those worries away. The thought of being punished is what makes us afraid. It shows that we have not really learned to love.

We love because God loved us first. But if we say we love God and don't love each other, we are liars. We cannot see God. So how can we love God, if we don't love the people we can see? The commandment that God has given us is: "Love God and love each other!"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Does John mean that we must love all the people we know? Am I truly friendly with everyone at my school? Do you agree that fear of punishment makes some people kind to others?

CLOSING

Blessed be God
 who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!
Let us remember our relatives and friends
 who have died.

allow a minute or two
of silence

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
 and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. **Amen.**
May their souls
 and the souls of all the faithful departed,
 through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

November 4, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Almost 2,300 years ago, the Hebrew people moved to Egypt because there was not enough food in their own land. They were happy in Egypt until a king came to power who did not like them. The king made them his slaves. They had to make bricks for the king's great monuments. Soon the king saw how many slaves there were, and he began to fear that they would rise against him.

Today we begin to read from the book of Exodus *(EX-uh-dus)* about these events.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

▶ turn to
page 82

READING

Exodus 1:22; 2:1–4

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus *(EX-uh-dus):*

The king gave a command: "As soon as a Hebrew boy is born, throw him into the Nile River! But you can let the girls live."

A man from the Levi *(LEE-vye)* tribe married a woman from the same tribe, and she later had a baby boy. He was a beautiful child, and she kept him inside for three months. But when she could no longer keep him hidden, she made a basket out of reeds and covered it with tar. She put him in the basket and placed it in the tall grass along the edge of the Nile River. The baby's older sister stood off at a distance to see what would happen to him.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Egyptians and Hebrews came from different ethnic groups. Are there ethnic groups in my area that have difficulty living together? Do I have friends only from my own group?

CLOSING

Blessed be God
who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!
Let us remember our relatives and friends
who have died.

▶ allow a minute or two
of silence

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. **Amen.**
May their souls
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

November 5, 1999

INTRODUCTION

In yesterday's reading we heard about the cruel treatment of the Hebrew people in Egypt. The king commanded that all boy babies be killed. Today let us remember all children around the world who die through the cruelty of adults.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

▶ turn to page 82

READING

Exodus 2:5, 5 – 10

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus *(EX-uh-dus):*

One of the king's daughters came down to take a bath in the river. She saw the basket in the tall grass and sent one of her servants to pull it out of the water. When the king's daughter opened the basket, she saw the baby and felt sorry for him because he was crying. She said, "This must be one of the Hebrew babies."

At once the baby's older sister came up and asked, "Do you want me to get a Hebrew woman to take care of the baby for you?"

"Yes," the king's daughter answered.

So the girl brought the baby's mother, and the king's daughter told her, "Take care of this child, and I will pay you." The baby's mother carried him home and took care of him. And when he was old enough, she took him to the king's daughter, who adopted him. She named the child Moses.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Moses had two loving mothers because he was adopted. Do I know anyone who was adopted? How did God protect Moses?

CLOSING

Blessed be God
who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!
Let us remember our relatives and friends
who have died.

▶ allow a minute or two of silence

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. **Amen.**
May their souls
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

Let us also remember these intentions:

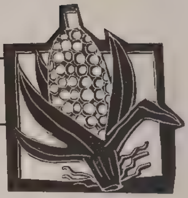
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, November 7, 1999



Reminder: November's Psalm is on page 12 of *Blessed Be God!* The closing today is the Litany of the Saints, on page 85.

A prayer on page 86, for relatives and friends who have died, can be used today or any day during November.

INTRODUCTION

During this month, we remember those who have died. Today's reading tells us to be ready for the wonderful day when all of us will be together in God's kingdom. That day will be as happy as a wedding.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Matthew 25:1, 2–10

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like what happened one night when ten girls took their oil lamps and went to a wedding. Five of the girls were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps, but no extra oil. The ones who were wise took along extra oil for their lamps.

"The groom was late arriving, and the girls became drowsy and fell asleep. Then in the middle of the night someone shouted, 'Here's the groom! Come to meet him!'

"When the girls got up and started getting their lamps ready, the foolish ones said to the others, 'Let us have some of your oil! Our lamps are going out.'

"The girls who were wise answered, 'There's not enough oil for all of us! Go and buy some for yourselves.'

"While the foolish girls were on their way to get some oil, the groom arrived. The girls who were ready went into the wedding, and the doors were closed."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What are we supposed to be ready for? How do we stay ready? What could Jesus mean by the oil and the lamps in this story?

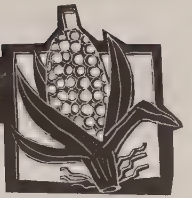
CLOSING

Let us now keep silence,
while we let the word of God
sink down into our hearts.

be quiet for half a minute or more;
then begin the Litany of the Saints,
on page 85

MONDAY PRAYER

November 8, 1999



INTRODUCTION

On this day in 1897, Dorothy Day was born. She led a pretty wild life as a young woman, but when she was 30, she joined the Catholic church and dedicated her life to service. Dorothy began the Catholic Worker movement for people who want to live simply and help the poor.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Exodus 3:1, 1–5, 9–10

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus *(EX-uh-dus)*:

One day, Moses was taking care of the sheep and goats of his father-in-law, and Moses decided to lead them across the desert to Sinai *(SYE-nye)*, the holy mountain. There an angel of the Lord appeared to him from a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up. "This is strange!" he said. "I'll go over there and see why the bush isn't burning up."

When the Lord saw Moses coming near the bush, he called him by name, and Moses answered, "Here I am."

God replied, "Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals—the ground where you are standing is holy. My people have begged for my help, and I have seen how cruel the Egyptians are to them. Now go to the king! I am sending you to lead my people out of his country."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Muslim people remove their shoes to pray. What signs of respect do I show when I pray?

CLOSING

Blessed be God
who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!
Let us remember our relatives and friends
who have died.

allow a minute or two
of silence

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. **Amen.**
May their souls
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

November 9, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today is the feast of the dedication of the church of Saint John the Baptist on Lateran Hill in Rome. Saint John Lateran is the cathedral *(kuh-THEE-drul)* of Rome's bishop, who is also the pope. That makes this building the "mother church" for Catholics all around the world.

People usually have good feelings about their church. We might visit our parish church today and learn something new about it.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Exodus 3:13–15

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus *(EX-uh-dus):*

Moses said, "I will tell the people of Israel that the God their ancestors worshiped has sent me to them. But what should I say, if they ask me your name?"

God said to Moses, "I am the eternal God. So tell them that the LORD, whose name is 'I Am,' has sent you. This is my name forever, and it is the name that people must use from now on."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What could the name, "I Am," mean? How many different names do I know for God? Which names mean the most to me?

CLOSING

Blessed be God
who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!
Let us remember our relatives and friends
who have died.

allow a minute or two
of silence

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. **Amen.**
May their souls
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

November 10, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember a peacemaker, Pope Leo the Great. He made a treaty with Attila the Hun and saved Rome from destruction.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

▶ turn to page 82

READING

Exodus 8:20–21, 24, 28, 29, 30–32

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus *(EX-uh-dus):*

Moses said to the king, "The LORD commands you to let his people go, so they can worship him. If you don't, he will send swarms of flies to attack you, your officials, and every citizen of your country."

The LORD kept his promise—the palace and the homes of the royal officials swarmed with flies, and the rest of the country was infested with them as well. Then the king told Moses, "I'll let you go into the desert to offer sacrifices, if you don't go very far."

"Your Majesty," Moses replied, "I'll pray for you as soon as I leave, and by tomorrow the flies will stop bothering you, your officials, and the citizens of your country."

After leaving the palace, Moses prayed, and the LORD answered his prayer. Not a fly was left to pester the king, his officials, or anyone else in Egypt. But the king turned stubborn again and would not let the people go.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why do people sometimes continue to do a wrong thing even when it hurts them?

CLOSING

Blessed be God
who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!
Let us remember our relatives and friends
who have died.

▶ allow a minute or two of silence

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. **Amen.**
May their souls
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

Let us also remember these intentions:

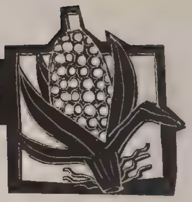
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

November 11, 1999



INTRODUCTION

On this Veterans Day we remember a saint who was a veteran. Martin of Tours was drafted into the Roman army when he was 15. One day, he saw a poor man shivering in the cold. Martin cut his warm military cape in two and gave the man half. In a dream, Martin saw Jesus wearing the cape he had given the poor man. This changed Martin's life. He left the army and dedicated his life to works of charity.

In the book of Exodus we learn how Moses asked the king of Egypt nine times to free the Hebrews. But the king refused and God punished him. Today we read about the tenth and last punishment.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Exodus 12:3, 7–8, 11, 12, 13, 14

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus *(EX-uh-dus):*

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel that the head of each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for his family to eat. Some of the blood must be put on the two doorposts and above the door of each house where the animals are to be eaten. That night the animals are to be roasted and eaten, together with bitter herbs and thin bread made without yeast.

"When you eat the meal, be dressed and ready to travel. Have your sandals on, carry your walking stick in your hand, and eat quickly. This is the Passover festival in my honor.

"That same night I will pass through Egypt and kill the first-born son in every family and the first-born male of all animals. The blood on the houses will show me where you live, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

"Remember this day and celebrate it each year as a festival in my honor."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

When do Jews celebrate Passover each year? What do the Passover foods mean? Why is this Jewish celebration important to Christians?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God, you protected the Israelites
through the blood of Passover lambs.
Continue to protect us all
through the blood of Jesus Christ.
He is our Passover sacrifice, our saving Lamb.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

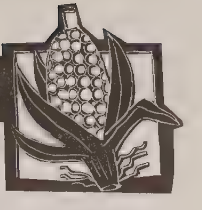
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

November 12, 1999



INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Josaphat *(JO-suh-faht),* who was a holy bishop in Ukraine *(you-KRANE),* a country in eastern Europe. Josaphat was unhappy about the separated groups of Christians in his country. In 1623, he was murdered because he tried to unite them. Today Christian groups are still not united. Let us pray for peace among all Christians in eastern Europe.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Exodus 12:28–29, 29, 31, 39–41

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus:

The people of Israel did what Moses and Aaron *(AIR-un)* had told them to do. At midnight the LORD killed the first-born son of every Egyptian family. He also killed the first-born male of every animal that belonged to the Egyptians.

During the night the king sent for Moses and Aaron and told them, "Get your people out of my country and leave us alone! Go and worship the LORD, as you have asked."

The Israelites *(IS-ree-uh-lites)* left Egypt in such a hurry that they did not have time to prepare any food except the dough made without yeast. So they baked it and made thin bread.

The LORD's people left Egypt exactly four hundred thirty years after they had arrived. On that night the LORD kept watch for them, and on this same night each year Israel will always keep watch in honor of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How might the Israelites have felt about their escape? How would it feel to become a refugee? What stories about refugees are in today's news?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God, you protected the Israelites
through the blood of Passover lambs.
Continue to protect us all
through the blood of Jesus Christ.
He is our Passover sacrifice, our saving Lamb.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, November 14, 1999

Reminder: If you collect Thanksgiving gifts for those in need, you may want to use the blessing on page 350.

INTRODUCTION

In today's reading Jesus tells us to be ready to show God what we are doing with our lives.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Matthew 25:14–15, 19–21

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "The kingdom is like what happened when a man went away and put his three servants in charge of all he owned. The man knew what each servant could do. So he handed five thousand coins to the first servant, two thousand to the second, and one thousand to the third. Then he left the country.

"Some time later the master of those servants returned. He called them in and asked what they had done with his money. The servant who had been given five thousand coins brought them in with the five thousand that he had earned. He said, 'Sir, you gave me five thousand coins, and I have earned five thousand more.'

"'Wonderful!' his master replied, 'You are a faithful servant. I left you in charge of only a little, but now I will put you in charge of much more. Come and share in my happiness!'"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does a person use money to make more money? What could the coins represent? What could this story mean in my own life?

CLOSING

Blessed be God
 who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!
Let us remember our relatives and friends
 who have died.

allow a minute or two
of silence

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
 and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. **Amen.**
May their souls
 and the souls of all the faithful departed,
 through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

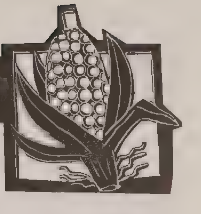
Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER



November 15, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Albert. He was an important thinker and writer during the Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas *(uh-KWYE-nus)* was his student at the University of Paris. They became good friends and were disliked for their new ideas about religion. But later their ideas became very popular.

In our own time, other writers are blamed for having new ideas about religion. It is not always easy to understand things before others do.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

➧ turn to page 82

READING

Exodus 13:18, 21–22; 14:5, 7, 9

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus:

The Israelites *(IS-ree-uh-lites)* left Egypt, prepared for battle. During the day the LORD went ahead of his people in a thick cloud, and during the night he went ahead of them in a flaming fire. That way the LORD could lead them at all times, whether day or night.

When the king of Egypt heard that the Israelites had finally left, he and his officials changed their minds and said, "Look what we have done! We let them get away, and they will no longer be our slaves."

The king commanded his officers in charge of his six hundred best chariots and all his other chariots to start after the Israelites. The king's horses and chariots and soldiers caught up with them while they were camping by the Red Sea.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does God lead me both day and night? The Israelites saw signs of God's presence with them. What are some signs that God is with our community?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of our ancestors,
  you freed the children of Israel
  from slavery and from fear.
You were with them by day and by night.
Be with us on our journey.
Guide and protect us,
  and bring us to the joy of your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

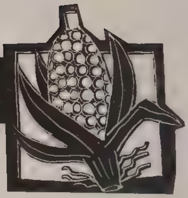
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

November 16, 1999



■ INTRODUCTION

We have been reading about Moses and his people. They are often called “children of Israel,” or “Israelites” *(IS-ree-uh-lites)*. Israel was the name given to Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. It is to Israel that the twelve tribes trace their beginnings. So they are all called by his name.

The family had first settled in the land of Canaan *(KAY-nun)*. So that is where the Israelites wanted to return when they left Egypt. In time, that land was also named Israel.

■ A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

➧ turn to
page 82

■ READING

Exodus 14:10–13

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus:

When the Israelites *(IS-ree-uh-lites)* saw the king coming with his army, they were frightened and begged the LORD for help. They also complained to Moses, “Wasn’t there enough room in Egypt to bury us? Is that why you brought us out here to die in the desert? Why did you bring us out of Egypt anyway? While we were there, didn’t we tell you to leave us alone? We would rather be slaves in Egypt than die in this desert!”

But Moses answered, “Don’t be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the LORD save you.”

The word of the Lord.

■ REFLECTION

Do I know anyone who complains when they should be grateful? Do I become crabby when I am tired or afraid, or when I don’t get my way? Do I turn to the Lord in times of trouble as Moses did?

■ CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of our ancestors,
  you freed the children of Israel
  from slavery and from fear.
You were with them by day and by night.
Be with us on our journey.
Guide and protect us,
  and bring us to the joy of your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing
“alleluia”

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

November 17, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, who died in 1231. By the time she was three years old, Elizabeth was engaged to be married. Fortunately, she and her husband loved one another and had a happy life.

Elizabeth did things with her whole heart. What she did most was spend money to help the sick and the homeless. When Elizabeth's husband died, her brother-in-law tried to save money by locking her up. But Elizabeth went to a convent and gave herself to prayer with her whole heart.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

▶ turn to page 82

READING

Exodus 14:21–23, 26–27, 28, 30

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus:

Moses stretched his arm over the sea, and the LORD sent a strong east wind that blew all night until there was dry land where the water had been. The sea opened up, and the Israelites *(IS-ree-uh-lites)* walked through on dry land with a wall of water on each side.

The Egyptian chariots and cavalry went after them. The LORD told Moses, "Stretch your arm toward the sea—the water will cover the Egyptians and their cavalry and chariots." Moses stretched out his arm, and at daybreak the water rushed toward the Egyptians. The water came and covered the chariots, the cavalry, and the whole Egyptian army.

On that day, the Israelites knew that the LORD had saved them.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Water is important in many Bible stories. What stories do I know that mention water? How is water used in church?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of our ancestors,
  you freed the children of Israel
  from slavery and from fear.
You were with them by day and by night.
Be with us on our journey.
Guide and protect us,
  and bring us to the joy of your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

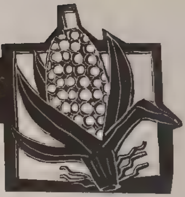
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

November 18, 1999



INTRODUCTION

Today we remember an American saint, Rose Philippine Duchesne *(doo-SHEN)*. She led a group of Sacred Heart sisters from France to Missouri and Kansas, to open schools. Like Moses, Mother Duchesne went into the wilderness with her people to do the work of God. Her Native American friends named her "the woman who prays always."

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Exodus 15:1, 2, 11, 13, 20

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus:

Moses and the Israelites *(IS-ree-uh-lites)* sang this song in praise of the LORD:
"I sing praises to the LORD
for his great victory!
The LORD is my strength,
the reason for my song,
because he has saved me.
I praise and honor the LORD —
he is my God and the God of my ancestors.
Majestic and holy! Fearsome and glorious!
Miracle worker!
The people you rescued were led
by your powerful love to your holy place."

Miriam was a prophet. So she took her tambourine and led the other women out to play their tambourines and to dance.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The Israelites thanked God with music and dancing and singing. How do I thank God? How will we celebrate the national day of Thanksgiving?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
During this season of harvest,
let us pray for those who need God's help.

For those who need food,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who see that others are fed,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are made holy
in the sharing of food,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Merciful Lord, teach us to be grateful
for what we have and for those who love us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

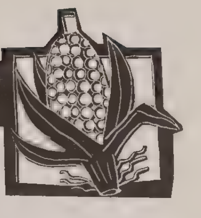
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

November 19, 1999



INTRODUCTION

In all the centuries that have followed their escape from slavery, the Jewish people have remembered the loving kindness of their God. In their worship, in their scriptures, in their conversation, Jews remind one another that their God is the One who "brought them out of the land of Egypt, that land of slavery." But God has an even greater gift in store for the people! In the Sinai desert God will promise to be with them forever.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Exodus 9:1–8

Listen to the words of the book of Exodus:

Two months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites *(IS-ree-uh-lites)* arrived at the desert near Mount Sinai *(SYE-nye),* where they set up camp at the foot of the mountain.

Moses went up the mountain to meet with the LORD God, who told him to say to the people: "You saw what I did in Egypt and you know how I brought you here to me, just as a mighty eagle carries its young. Now if you will faithfully obey me, you will be my very own people. The whole world is mine, but you will be my holy nation and serve me as priests."

"Moses, that is what you must tell the Israelites."

After Moses went back, he reported to the leaders what the LORD had said, and they promised, "We will do everything the LORD has commanded."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The Israelites could choose whether or not to follow God. When I am older, will I "do everything the Lord has commanded"?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
During this season of the harvest,
  let us pray for those who need God's help.

For people who try to obey the word of God,
  let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who lead the people of God,
  let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who listen to the saints,
  let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Loving God, have mercy on your people
  and strengthen families around the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, November 21, 1999

Reminders: A Prayer for Thanksgiving is on page 108. A Blessing of Gifts is on page 350. Begin making an Advent wreath, and copy the Psalm on page 112. Much to do!

INTRODUCTION

Sunday, November 21, is the feast of Christ the King. During November, we thank God for the food that people are harvesting and help people who do not have enough.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Matthew 25:31, 32, 34–40

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all of his angels, the people of all nations will be brought before him, and he will separate them, as shepherds separate their sheep from their goats.

"Then the king will say to those on his right, 'My father has blessed you! Come and receive the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world was created. When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me, and when I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear. When I was sick, you took care of me, and when I was in jail, you visited me.'

"Then the ones who pleased the Lord will ask, 'When did we give you something to eat or drink? When did we welcome you as a stranger or give you clothes to wear or visit you while you were sick or in jail?'

"The king will answer, 'Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me.'"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What have I shared? Whom have I visited? Have I cheered anyone up? Is there someone who needs my help?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

King of justice and compassion,
open our eyes to the needs of others.
Show us your face when we look at them,
so that our works and our words
may be worthy of your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

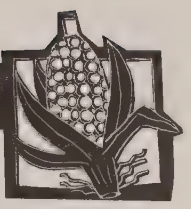
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

November 22, 1999



Reminders: You may want to make copies of Advent's Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer, found on pages 112 to 114. You also may want to make an Advent wreath.

INTRODUCTION

Thursday is Thanksgiving Day. What blessings do we thank God for? What will we do to help our families keep this celebration? If we have been collecting money, food or clothing for people in need, how can we bless and prepare these offerings?

Our readings this week speak about the call of God to share whatever we have been given. During this week, Americans will gather food to share with people who are hungry or homeless or all alone.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to page 82

READING

2 Corinthians 9:7, 8, 10–11

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Each of you must make up your own mind about how much to give. God loves people who love to give. God can bless you with everything you need, and you will always have more than enough to do all kinds of good things for others.

God gives seed to farmers and provides everyone with food. He will increase what you have, so that you can give even more to those in need. You will be blessed in every way, and you will be able to keep on being generous. Then many people will thank God when we deliver your gift.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

God does not give anything without asking us to share that gift with others. What is our nation asked to share? How can I do my part?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
During this season of harvest,
  let us pray for those who need God's help.

For those who produce food for the world,
  let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who share their food with others,
  let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who are starving today,
  let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Merciful Lord, teach us to be grateful
  for what we have and for those who love us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

November 23, 1999

Reminders: A Prayer for Thanksgiving is on page 108. A Blessing of Gifts is on page 350. You may want to use them this week.

INTRODUCTION

The first Thanksgiving was a celebration of a good harvest after two years of struggle and starvation. But even more, it was a dinner of gratitude, hospitality and respect between the Pilgrims and their Native American friends.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

Deuteronomy 24:19–21

Listen to the words of the book of Deuteronomy *(doo-ter-AH-nuh-mee):*

Moses said to Israel:
"If you forget to bring in a stack of harvested grain, don't go back in the field to get it. Leave it for the poor, including foreigners *(FOR-in-erz),* orphans, and widows, and the LORD will make you successful in everything you do.

"When you harvest your olives, don't try to get them all for yourself, but leave some for the poor. And when you pick your grapes, go over the vines only once, then let the poor have what is left. You lived in poverty as slaves in Egypt until the LORD your God rescued you. That's why I am giving you these laws."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

God does not give us anything without asking us to share that gift with others. What have we as a class been given? How do we share that with others?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
During this season of harvest,
let us pray for those who need God's help.

For those who must ask others for food,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who see that others are fed,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are made holy
in the sharing of food,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

Merciful Lord, teach us to be grateful
for what we have and for those who love us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

November 24, 1999

INTRODUCTION

November, the month of harvest, is coming to a close. We look ahead now to a new season with its own prayers and gifts. But first we have a national day of thanksgiving. Tomorrow, in our parishes and in our homes, we will celebrate the loving kindness of our God.

A PSALM FOR NOVEMBER

turn to
page 82

READING

1 Timothy 6:7, 9 – 10, 17 – 18

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

We didn't bring anything into this world, and we won't take anything with us when we leave. People who want to be rich fall into all sorts of temptations and traps. They are caught by foolish and harmful desires that drag them down and destroy them. The love of money causes all kinds of trouble. Some people want money so much that they have given up their faith and caused themselves a lot of pain.

Warn the rich people of this world not to be proud or to trust in wealth that is easily lost. Tell them to have faith in God, who is rich and blesses us with everything we need to enjoy life. Instruct them to do as many good deeds as they can and to help everyone. Remind the rich to be generous and share what they have.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does the love of money "cause all kinds of trouble"? How can a person's desires shape a person's life? What are my desires? What are my riches?

CLOSING

The Lord is good and listens to our prayers.
During this season of harvest,
let us pray for those who need God's help.

For those who need food,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who see that others are fed,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are made holy
in the sharing of food,
let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us also remember these intentions:

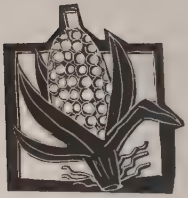
Merciful Lord, teach us to be grateful
for what we have and for those who love us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

A Prayer for Thanksgiving



Students should prepare four or five petitions for the needs of others. Decorate the room with banners or posters that represent the people, relationships, talents and events for which we are thankful.

The service might continue with the Blessing of Gifts (on page 350) or the Blessing of Food for Sharing (on page 351).

Begin and end with song, such as "Now thank we all our God" (page 158 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students), *or "All creatures of our God and King" (page 100).*

Introduction

In celebration of Thanksgiving, we gather to praise the Lord. We pray for the needs of others, and we hope that all God's wonderful gifts will be shared fairly in our world.

We begin by praying the Psalm for November.

A Psalm for November

➧ turn to
page 82

Reading

Matthew 15:33–37

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

The disciples of Jesus said, "This place is like a desert. Where can we find enough food to feed such a crowd?" Jesus asked them how much food they had. They replied, "Seven small loaves of bread and a few little fish."

After Jesus had told the people to sit down, he took the seven loaves of bread and the fish, and gave thanks. He then broke them and handed them to his disciples, who passed them around to the crowds.

Everyone ate all they wanted, and the leftovers filled seven large baskets.

The gospel of the Lord.

Petitions for Those in Need

Jesus, you heal us and you feed us.
Hear the prayers we offer you today.

➧ one or several students read
the petitions for the needs of others;
when finished, the leader prays:

Continue to watch over your people, Lord.
Feed, comfort and protect them,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

Blessing

➧ turn to page 350 or 351,
or hold out one hand toward
everyone in blessing and say:

At this time of Thanksgiving,
may our gracious God,
the giver of the harvest,
bless and protect us:

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

➧ all sing
a closing song

ADVENT

Sunday, November 28, to Friday, December 24

ADVENT 1999

ABOUT THE SEASON

On Sunday, November 28, Advent begins. Advent is a period of simple living and extra prayer. It is a time to prepare for a new coming of Jesus our Savior.

LOOKING AHEAD

The first coming of Jesus, at Bethlehem, will not happen again. At Christmas we will remember that coming, but now we prepare for a new coming. Every time Jesus comes, it surprises us. It is never exactly the way we expect it to happen.

Some people want the Savior to come with great power to reward them and wipe out their enemies. But Jesus is a loving and peaceful Savior. He calls his followers to make the whole world loving and peaceful. During Advent, we try to prepare our homes and our lives for Jesus, the King of glory and the Prince of peace.

▪ MANY PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND ADVENT. They use the time to celebrate Christmas early. Maybe we cannot do anything about the decorations in the shopping malls that get put up so early, but we can do something in our classroom. We can wait for Christmas decorations and gifts and parties. We can wait as the world waited long ago for the coming of Jesus and as we wait now for Jesus' coming in glory.

We also can help our families keep the peace of Advent by not worrying about what we are going to get for Christmas. This is very hard because it is so exciting to get gifts! It will be easier if we spend time thinking about the good things we can give to the people we love. We can start early and make things to give. We can help make some of the decorations we use at home. This way we have the joy of making as well as the joy of giving. Parents especially love things their children make.

▪ WE KNOW THAT CHRISTMAS IS MORE THAN JUST GIFTS. We also know that Christmas is more than just one day. December 25 is the first day of Christmastime, a season that lasts until January 9, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

During Advent, we can talk about what the Christmas season means to us. We can help with the preparations. Once we start doing these things, it may become easier to keep a peaceful Advent.

▪ THE READINGS FOR DAILY PRAYER DURING THE EARLY PART OF ADVENT COME FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. The words of this book come from several different prophets who tried to comfort the people during their years of exile and suffering. They are words of hope. They tell about future days, when God will bring peace to those who remain patient and faithful. During the last week of Advent, our readings reflect ancient prayers called "O Antiphons." These are Advent prayers we use to ask Jesus to come soon.

PREPARATION FOR ADVENT

The Advent Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer are on pages 15, 16 and 17 of *Blessed Be God!* If students do not have that booklet, you may want to make copies of those prayers for the whole class. They are found on pages 112, 113 and 114 of this book.

▪ CLASSROOM DECORATIONS: For Advent, you can use purple, silver or dark blue stars to celebrate the long nights. Or you can use paper snowflakes, pinecones or other things that are signs of winter in your part of the country. You may want to put out an empty stable as a sign that the Savior will soon come. You can set up an Advent calendar and open up one window each day.

▪ THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO HAVE IS AN ADVENT WREATH. An Advent wreath is a circle of evergreen branches with four candles placed in or

around it. The circular wreath is a sign of God's loving care, which has no ending. There are four candles for the four Sundays of this season.

Usually, three of the candles are purple and one is rose colored. (The rose candle is first lighted during the third week of Advent.) Or, all four of the candles can be white, red or purple. Some people hang the wreath from the ceiling with four thick ribbons.

Before you use your Advent wreath for the first time, bless it. A Blessing of the Advent Wreath is on page 115.

- DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS BREAK, you may want to decorate the classroom (but not the prayer center) for Christmas. That way the Christmas decorations will be there to greet you when you return in January. You still will have several days of Christmastime to enjoy when you return to school after Christmas break.

On page 140 is the Blessing before Christmas Break. Remind the teacher about this blessing.

On page 147 is the Blessing of the Stable, which is to be used at the first class meeting after the Christmas break. You may want to look it over and make some preparations for it before the break so that you are ready on the day you return to class.

The Great Year of Jubilee begins on Christmas Day. A Prayer for a Time of Jubilee is on page 148. It can be used before your break or after you return to school in January. Some preparation is needed for the prayer. Look it over soon so that you will be ready.

- SUGGESTED HYMNS: "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (page 166 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) is a famous Advent song that comes from France. The Hebrew word "Emmanuel" means "God is with us." Emmanuel is one name we use for Jesus. This song has a special verse for each day of the final week of Advent. It is used every day of Advent in Daily and Weekly Prayer.

The Psalm for Advent is the Canticle of Zechariah. (Zechariah was the father of John the Baptist.) If you wish to sing Zechariah's song instead of reciting it, use the music on page 8 in the hymnal.

"Soon and very soon" (page 190 in the hymnal) is an Advent gospel song. "Prepare the way of the Lord" (page 174 in the hymnal) is a round that can be sung over and over.

In honor of the Immaculate Conception, celebrated on December 8, and Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12, sing Mary's own song, the Magnificat (page 16 or 158 in the hymnal), or you can sing "Immaculate Mary" (page 140 in the hymnal).

■ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Will it be difficult to make an Advent wreath or to store it between meetings? This may take some extra thought. Perhaps the entire school of religion will join for opening prayer around a single large wreath and then go to their classrooms. If this is done, all the students should make an extra effort to come on time and to move smoothly to their classrooms when prayer is over. This way, the Advent prayers will be pleasant and peaceful.

If you want an Advent wreath for your individual space, you might work with the students who use your classroom on weekdays and make just one wreath for all of you. Perhaps one group of students could bring the candles and the others could bring the evergreen branches.

- THERE ARE MANY WONDERFUL DAYS DURING DECEMBER. On any day of Advent you can use the day's Daily Prayer or the week's Weekly Prayer with equal ease.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

The Canticle of Zechariah, Luke 1:68 – 71, 78 – 79

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

➧ light the correct number of candles
of the Advent wreath:
Nov. 28 to Dec. 4: one (purple) candle
December 5 to 11: two (purple) candles
December 12 to 18: three candles
(one rose and two purple)
December 19 to 24: all four candles

LEADER Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
who shepherds the people and sets them free.

ALL **God raises from David's house**
a child with power to save.

SIDE A Through the holy prophets,
God promised in ages past
to save us from enemy hands,
from the grip of all who hate us.

SIDE B Out of God's deepest mercy
a dawn will come from on high,
light for those shadowed by death,
a guide for our feet on the way to peace.

LEADER Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
who shepherds the people and sets them free.

ALL **God raises from David's house**
a child with power to save.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

➧ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

ADVENT

MEAL PRAYER

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Come, Lord Jesus!
ALL **Come quickly!**
LEADER Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:
in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you
in this food and in our sharing.
Blessed are you as we wait in joyful hope
for the coming of our Savior,
Jesus Christ.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.
ALL **Amen.**

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

ADVENT

END OF THE DAY PRAYER

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER In the quiet waiting of Advent,
let us pray to the Lord.

stop; allow a minute or so of silence,
and then say:

God of the promise, listen to our prayers.
Be with us through this evening
and through the night.
Be close to us in our fears
and in our hopes,
and bring us to the brightness of morning.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
ALL **Amen.**

the following words can be sung to the
melody for "Creator of the stars of night" or
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow":

All praise, eternal Son, to thee
Whose advent sets thy people free;
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Spirit ever more.
LEADER Come, Lord Jesus!
ALL **Come quickly!**

all make
the sign
of the cross

A Blessing of the Advent Wreath

This blessing can be used at any time after the wreath is prepared but before the first candle is lighted. A bowl of burning incense can be placed near or in the middle of the wreath.

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Our help is in the name of the Lord:

ALL
Who made heaven and earth.

LEADER
Come, Lord Jesus!

ALL
Come quickly!

LEADER
It is wintertime. Days are short and nights are long. We need the light of Christ. We need Christ's warmth, love and joy. And so we gather around this wreath in hope.

The circle of this wreath will remind us
of the coming of Christ,
whose love for us has no end.

The light of these candles will remind us
of the coming of Christ,
who is the light of the world.

The green color of these branches will remind us
of the coming of Christ,
who brings us eternal life.

My friends, let us bless the Lord.

stop; allow a minute or so of silence,
and then say:

By day and by night,
and through every season,
you watch over us, Lord.

We praise you for this Advent wreath.
It is the evergreen crown of your royal people,
and it shines with the promise of victory.

By the light of this wreath
we shall wait in patience for your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

He will comfort our fears
and bring hope to our waiting world.

All glory be yours,
now and for ever.

ALL
Amen.

all make
the sign
of the cross

If this blessing continues with Daily or Weekly Prayer, turn to the page with today's date. If not, end the blessing by singing an Advent song, such as "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (page 166 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) or "I want to walk as a child of the light" (page 138 in the hymnal).

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, November 28, 1999

➧ Reminders: Prayer includes the lighting of an Advent wreath. You may want to bless the wreath; see page 115.
Advent's Psalm is on page 15 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

Advent begins a new church year. This year most of the Sunday gospel readings will be taken from the Gospel according to Mark. Mark's book is very short and probably the oldest of the four gospels. It would be interesting to read the whole book during Advent. That way we could discover things that make it different from the gospel of Matthew.

Today, Mark reminds us to be ready for the coming of Jesus. This is what the season of Advent is for.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

➧ turn to page 112

READING

Mark 13:33–37

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus said to his disciples, "Watch out and be ready! You don't know when the time will come. It is like what happens when a man goes away for a while and places his servants in charge of everything. He tells each of them what to do, and he orders the guard to keep alert.

"So be alert! You don't know when the master of the house will come back. It could be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or in the morning. But if he comes suddenly, don't let him find you asleep. I tell everyone just what I have told you. Be alert!"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What should we be alert for? What am I waiting for? How can I use the days of Advent to get myself ready?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*Hymnal for Catholic Students*, page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

➧ put out the candle of the Advent wreath

MONDAY PRAYER

November 29, 1999

Reminders: Prayer includes lighting the Advent wreath. You can bless it before you begin prayer today; see page 115.

Advent's Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer are on pages 15 to 17 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

Advent has begun, and with it, a new church year. Pope John Paul II has declared the year 2000 a Great Year of Jubilee. He will celebrate the opening of the year with great festivity on Christmas Day. As we stand at the beginning of the third millennium of the church's life, it is good to look back over its long history. We can see how God has guided and protected it, calling it always to become holy and to act with justice.

We can think about all these things as together we prepare to welcome Jesus at Christmas.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 42:16

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

The Lord says this:
I will lead the blind on roads
they have never seen,
and I will guide them on paths
they have never traveled.
Their road is dark and rough,
but I will give light and make the road smooth.
This is a promise I will never break.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Who do you think are the blind people that God wants to lead? What new paths do you think God will lead you to? How does God make the road smooth for us?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*Hymnal for Catholic Students,* page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candle
of the Advent wreath

TUESDAY PRAYER

November 30, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today is the feast of Saint Andrew. He and his brother Peter were fishermen. They were also followers of John the Baptist. John told the people to be sorry for their sins and to turn to God. He told them to make themselves ready for the coming of God's Messiah. When John was arrested, Andrew and Peter returned to their fishing. They wondered what God would do.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Matthew 4:12, 17–20

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he went to Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)*. Then Jesus started preaching, "Turn back to God! The kingdom of heaven will soon be here."

While Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers. One was Simon, also known as Peter, and the other was Andrew. They were fishermen, and they were casting their net into the lake. Jesus said to them, "Come with me! I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish." Right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How did John's preaching prepare Andrew and Peter for the call of Jesus? How are we being prepared now for our mission? How do we know what Jesus calls us to do?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

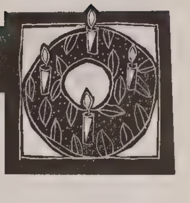
sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,*
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candle
of the Advent wreath

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

December 1, 1999



INTRODUCTION

Rosa Parks was an African American woman. On this day in 1955, she refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She was disobeying a law that said that African Americans could use only the back seats of buses. Rosa Parks was arrested, but she had challenged the conscience of our nation.

Rosa Parks spoke as a prophet, calling upon God and God's people to bring justice.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

➧ turn to page 112

READING

Isaiah 27:2–3, 5–6

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

The Lord said:
At that time you must sing about a fruitful
vineyard *(VIN-yerd).*
I, the Lord, will protect it and always keep
it watered.
I will guard it day and night to keep it
from harm.
If the vineyard depends on me for protection,
it will become my friend and be at peace
with me.
Someday Israel will take root like a vine.
It will blossom and bear fruit
that covers the earth.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does Isaiah mean when he calls Israel the Lord's vineyard? Do I forget sometimes that God protects me day and night? Am I at peace with God?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel" *(Hymnal for Catholic Students,* page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

➧ put out the candle of the Advent wreath

THURSDAY PRAYER

December 2, 1999

INTRODUCTION

On this day in 1980, four brave women were murdered because they were helping the poor people of El Salvador. Their names are Maura Clarke, Ita Ford, Dorothy Kazel and Jean Donovan. These women knew that what they were doing was dangerous. Earlier in the year their friend Archbishop Oscar Romero had been killed while he was saying Mass. They thought about returning to a safe place, but they decided to stay and continue their important work. Today let us pray for the people of El Salvador.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

➧ turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 26:8–9, 12–13

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

Our LORD, you are the one we trust to bring
about justice;
above all else we want your name
to be honored.
Throughout the night, my heart searches
for you,
because your decisions show everyone on
this earth
how to live right.
You will give us peace, LORD,
because everything we have done was
by your power.
Others have ruled over us besides you,
our LORD God,
but we obey only you.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does God bring about justice? How does God bring about peace? Are there ways that I can work for justice and peace?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*,
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

➧ put out the candle
of the Advent wreath

FRIDAY PRAYER

December 3, 1999

INTRODUCTION

The Jewish festival of Hanukkah begins at sundown today. It is an eight-day feast of lights. According to a legend, one day's supply of oil kept the lamp of the temple in Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)* burning for eight days. This happened when the temple was surrounded by enemies. This gentle light shining through a dark time continues to bring hope and stir memories.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 30:19, 26

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)*:

People of Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)*, you don't need to cry anymore. The LORD is kind, and as soon as he hears your cries for help, he will come.

Then the LORD will bandage his people's injuries and heal the wounds he has caused. The moon will shine as bright as the sun, and the sun will shine seven times brighter than usual. It will be like the light of seven days all at once.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does God help people when they are sad? How is it like bright sunshine when someone cheers us up? Isaiah compares God's presence to sunlight. What are some other signs of God's presence and power?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*,
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candle
of the Advent wreath

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a reading from the Gospel for Sunday, December 5, 1999

INTRODUCTION

During Advent we try to make God the center of our lives. God has sent messengers to us to tell us what that means. Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)* the prophet was one of these messengers. John the Baptist was another messenger, and he was very much like Isaiah. He told everyone to change their lives so that they would be ready for the coming of the Messiah. John was the last prophet to prepare the way for Jesus.

Today's reading is taken from the gospel for Sunday, December 5. It is the very beginning of Mark's gospel.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Mark 1:1–8

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

This is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began just as God had said in the book written by Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)* the prophet, "I am sending my messenger to get the way ready for you. In the desert someone is shouting, 'Get the road ready for the Lord! Make a straight path for him.'"

So John the Baptist showed up in the desert and told everyone, "Turn back to God and be baptized! Then your sins will be forgiven."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why does Mark call the story of Jesus "good news"? Do I act like my belief in Jesus is "good news"? If John the Baptist were preaching to us today, what might he say?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,*
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

MONDAY PRAYER

December 6, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Can you guess the name of the saint we remember today? He was a bishop of the early church. He is the patron of sailors and sea travelers. He is the protector of children. He is admired by people all over the world, and many stories have been made up about him. In one story he gave poor girls dowry *(DOW-ree)* money so they could marry.

Dutch settlers in this country called this saint and bishop Sinter Klaas. That is why we sometimes call him by a name that sounds very much like that, Santa Claus. Do you know his real name? It is Saint Nicholas!

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

➧ turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 41:8–10, 13

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

Israel, you are my servant. I chose you,
the family of my friend Abraham.
From far across the earth I brought you here
and said,
"You are my chosen servant.
I haven't forgotten you."
Don't be afraid. I am with you.
Don't tremble with fear. I am your God.
I will make you strong,
as I protect you with my arm
and give you victories.

I am the LORD your God.
I am holding your hand,
so don't be afraid.
I am here to help you.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In the reading God says, "Don't be afraid. I am with you." How might this message help people in danger? Can we remember other times mentioned in the Bible, when God says, "Don't be afraid" or "I am with you"?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,*
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

➧ put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

TUESDAY PRAYER

December 7, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Ambrose, a saint with a gift for leadership. He entered government service as a young man, and soon was appointed governor. In 374, the bishop of Milan died and the people gathered to elect a new bishop. Noisy arguments began, and Governor Ambrose came to restore order. He was so good at peacemaking that someone called out "Ambrose for bishop!" and soon everyone agreed.

Ambrose thought it was a crazy idea because he wasn't even baptized, but they convinced him that it was God's will. So Ambrose was baptized, confirmed, given his first eucharist, ordained a priest and consecrated a bishop—all within a week! The Holy Spirit sometimes does amazing things.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

➧ turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 30:19–21

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

People of Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem),* you don't need to cry anymore. The LORD is kind, and as soon as he hears your cries for help, he will come. The LORD has given you trouble and sorrow as your food and drink. But now you will again see the LORD, your teacher, and he will guide you. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice saying, "This is the road! Now follow it."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why doesn't God eliminate all the troubles from our lives? Why does Isaiah call the Lord a "teacher"? Do I listen to God's voice telling me, "This is the road! Now follow it"?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

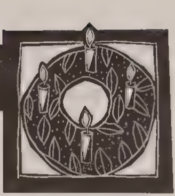
Our Father . . .

➧ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,*
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

➧ put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

WEDNESDAY PRAYER



December 8, 1999

Reminders: Today use October's Meal Prayer, on page 49, and the End of the Day Prayer on page 126.

If you celebrate the eucharist today, you may skip or shorten this prayer. Talk these things over with your teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember the Immaculate Conception *(ee-MAC-you-lit kuhn-SEP-shun)* of Mary. We celebrate our belief that Mary was full of God's grace from the first moment of her life. God gave Mary this honor because she would be invited to be the mother of the Savior.

Today's reading is taken from the book of Revelation. This last book of the Bible is filled with prophesies *(PRAH-fuh-seez)* of the struggle between good and evil. In one vision the writer tells of a woman who would be surrounded by God's glory and of her child who would rule through the power of God.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Revelation 12:1, 5–6

Listen to the words of the book of Revelation:

Something important appeared in the sky. It was a woman whose clothes were the sun. The moon was under her feet, and a crown made of twelve stars was on her head.

The woman gave birth to a son who would rule all nations with an iron rod. The boy was snatched away. He was taken to God and placed on his throne. The woman ran into the desert to a place that God had prepared for her.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Where in my home and parish are there images of Mary? Do any of these images show the moon and stars mentioned in this reading? What is Mary's importance in God's plan? What is Mary's importance to me?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

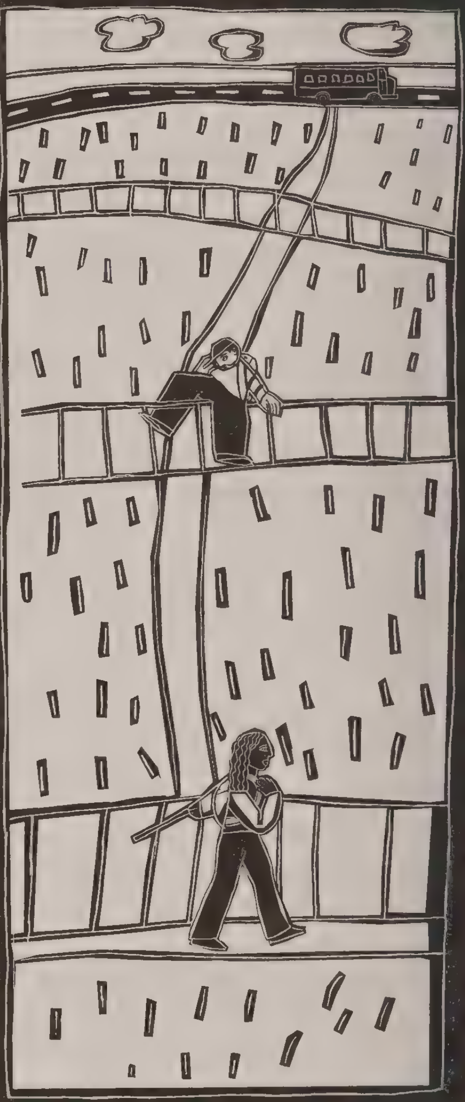
Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(Hymnal for Catholic Students,
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary



all make the sign
of the cross

LEADER We praise you, Lord,
in this daughter of Israel,
Mary, your faithful one and our mother!
We pray as she did:
may your name be holy;
may the hungry be filled
and the rich know hunger;
may the proud be scattered
and the oppressed raised up;
may your love be ever with your people.
We make our prayer always
through Mary's child;
he arose from her the sun of justice,
Jesus, who is Lord for ever and ever.

ALL **Amen.**

LEADER O Mary, conceived without sin:

ALL **Pray for us who have recourse to you.**

sing this to the melody
for "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,* page 173)

Behold a Virgin bearing him
Who comes to save us from our sin.
The prophets cry: Prepare his way!
Make straight the path to Christmas Day.

all make the sign
of the cross

adapted from *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*

THURSDAY PRAYER

December 9, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Blessed Juan Diego *(hwan dee-AY-go)*, an Aztec Indian who lived in Mexico. He had a vision of Mary in 1531. Her picture was left on his cloak. The picture shows Mary as a young woman expecting a baby. We call her "Our Lady of Guadalupe" *(gwa-da-LOO-pay)*.

Also, as the first tiny crescent of the new moon becomes visible tonight, the Muslim month of fasting and prayer called Ramadan *(RAH-muh-don)* begins.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 25:6, 8–10

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)*:

On this mountain the Lord All-Powerful
will prepare for all nations
a feast of the finest foods.
Choice wines and the best meats will be served.
The Lord All-Powerful will destroy
the power of death
and wipe away all tears.
No longer will his people be insulted
everywhere.
The Lord has spoken!
At that time, people will say,
"The Lord has saved us!
Let's celebrate. We waited and hoped—
now our God is here."
The powerful arm of the Lord will protect this
mountain.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In what ways can I wipe away other people's tears? In what ways can I help people who are insulted? What other ways can I give comfort?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*,
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

FRIDAY PRAYER

December 10, 1999

■ INTRODUCTION

On this date in 1968, a Trappist monk named Thomas Merton died. Thomas spent much of his time in prayer and study, but he also was an excellent teacher and writer. He wrote about his conversion to Jesus, about his life as a monk and about the need everyone has for prayer. Thomas helped many people understand how God is with us today.

Thomas Merton also wrote about the need for justice. It is fitting that he died on Human Rights Day. This day reminds us that the countries of the world have agreed to respect the basic human rights of every person. The writings of Thomas Merton remind us that there is still much work to do for justice.

■ A PSALM FOR ADVENT

➧ turn to
page 112

■ READING

Isaiah 58:6–8

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

I'll tell you what it really means to worship
the LORD.
Remove the chains of prisoners who are
chained unjustly.
Free those who are abused!
Share your food with everyone who is hungry;
share your home with the poor and homeless.
Give clothes to those in need;
don't turn away your relatives.
Then your light will shine like the dawning sun,
and you will quickly be healed.

The word of the Lord.

■ REFLECTION

Has my family or parish done anything special during Advent to help people in need? Is there anything I can still do to help?

■ CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*,
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

➧ put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, December 12, 1999

INTRODUCTION

During the season of Advent, many people make themselves ready for the coming of the Savior. We, too, have been making ourselves and our world more ready to recognize Christ and to follow him.

The mystery of God is very great. We know that Jesus is with us and with the whole church. And yet we prepare for his coming. There are many ways that Jesus comes to us, and there are many ways to make ready.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

John 1:19–20, 22–23, 26–27

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

The leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and temple helpers to ask John who he was. He told them plainly, "I am not the Messiah."

They said, "Who are you then? We have to give an answer to the ones who sent us. Tell us who you are!"

John answered in the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)*, "I am only someone shouting in the desert, 'Get the road ready for the Lord!'"

John told them, "I use water to baptize people. But here with you is someone you don't know. Even though I came first, I am not good enough to untie his sandals."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Who is John talking about? How am I helping to get the road ready for the Lord? What is the road that the Lord travels?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,*
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

MONDAY PRAYER

December 13, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Lucy. In Latin and Italian her name is Santa Lucia *(loo-CHEE-uh)*, which means "holy light." Her feast is in Advent, when we think about light and darkness and remember that Jesus, our light, is coming.

Lucy was killed for her faith about 20 years before it became legal to be Christian. She may have been about 12 years old. In some countries on this day, one girl in each family is the "Lucy Queen." With a wreath of candles in her hair, she wakes the family and serves them breakfast.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

▶ turn to
page 112

READING

Genesis 1:1–5

Listen to the words of the book of Genesis *(JEN-uh-sis)*:

In the beginning
God created the heavens and the earth.
The earth was barren, with no form of life;
 it was under a roaring ocean
  covered with darkness.
But the Spirit of God was moving
  over the water.
God said, "I command light to shine!"
 And light started shining.
God looked at the light and saw that
  it was good.
He separated light from darkness
 and named the light "Day"
  and the darkness "Night."
Evening came and then morning—
 that was the first day.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What are some of the meanings light has for us? What are some of the ways we use lights in our celebration of Advent and Christmas? Do I know anyone who brings light and joy when they come into a room?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*,
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
 to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

▶ put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

TUESDAY PRAYER

December 14, 1999

INTRODUCTION

On this day 200 years ago, people all over the world mourned the death of George Washington. He had led his country during the war for independence. He had served as its first president. His wisdom and strength helped this nation to make a good beginning. In gratitude we call him the Father of Our Country.

As we remember his annniversary, let us pray for wise and honorable leaders today.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

▶ turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 49:5–6

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

Even before I was born,
  the LORD God chose me to serve him
  and to lead back the people of Israel.
So the LORD has honored me
  and made me strong.
Now the LORD says to me,
"It isn't enough for you to be
    merely my servant.
You must do more than lead back
  those who have survived
  from the tribes of Israel.
I have placed you here as a light for the Gentiles;
  you must take my saving power
  to everyone on earth."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does it mean that the people of Israel are a "light for the Gentiles"? Are the members of our class a light for others? Do I light up the spaces that I occupy?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,*
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
  to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

▶ put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

December 15, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Each family has customs and rituals to help them mark Advent as a special time. Some spend the days before Christmas creating a Jesse Tree. Each evening they make symbols out of paper to represent some of the people we read about in the Bible, from Adam and Eve to Mary and Joseph. This is a way to honor the Hebrew people from whom Jesus came.

This custom reminds us of Isaiah's prophecy *(PRAH-fuh-see)* that the Messiah would be a new branch on King David's family tree.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 11:1–4

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

The LORD says this:
"Like a branch that sprouts from a stump,
someone from David's family
will someday be king.
The Spirit of the LORD will take control of him
and give him understanding, wisdom
and insight.
He will be powerful,
and he will know and honor the LORD.
His greatest joy will be to obey the LORD.
This king won't judge by appearances
or listen to rumors.
The poor and the needy will be treated
with fairness and with justice."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How is Jesus like a branch sprouting from David's family tree? How are we like branches on the family tree of Jesus? How does the family of Jesus treat poor and needy people "with fairness and with justice"?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,*
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

THURSDAY PRAYER

December 16, 1999

INTRODUCTION

This the first of nine days known in Latin America as "Las Posadas" *(lahs po-SAH-dahs).* This means "lodgings," or a place to stay. Each night during Las Posadas, people representing Mary and Joseph lead a procession to several homes to ask for lodgings. At the last stop each night, everyone receives something to eat.

The procession helps us recall the search Mary and Joseph made for a place to stay in Bethlehem. Let us also remember all the homeless people who today are looking for lodgings.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

▶ turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 35:8, 9–10

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

A good road will be there,
and it will be named
"God's Sacred Highway."
No lions or other wild animals will come
near that road;
only those the LORD has saved
will travel there.
The people the LORD has rescued will come
back singing as they enter Zion.
Happiness will be a crown they will
always wear.
They will celebrate and shout
because all sorrows
and worries will be gone far away.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What road will I take in life? Who will walk on the road with me? What doors will I knock on?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students,*
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

▶ put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

FRIDAY PRAYER

December 17, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Christmas is only one week away. The next seven days have special prayers, called "O Antiphons" *(AN-tih-fonz)*. In these prayers we call Jesus by seven titles. The seven verses of the song "O come, O come, Emmanuel" are based on these prayers. Our closing prayers will include the "O Antiphon" for each day.

In today's prayer we call Jesus "Wisdom." In today's reading, Saint Paul says that God's wisdom is great and trustworthy. Paul is reminding us to rely on God.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

▶ turn to
page 112

READING

Romans 11:33–36

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Who can measure the wealth and wisdom and knowledge of God? Who can understand his decisions or explain what he does?

"Has anyone known the thoughts
of the Lord,
or given him advice?
Has anyone loaned something to the Lord
that must be repaid?"

Everything comes from the Lord. All things were made because of him and will return to him. Praise the Lord forever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why do people sometimes question God's wisdom? Why does the liturgy call Jesus God's Wisdom? How will following Jesus give me greater wisdom?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O Wisdom, O holy Word of God,
you govern all creation
with your strong yet tender care.
Come and show your people
the way to salvation.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*,
page 166, verse 2)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

▶ put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, December 19, 1999

Reminder: On page 140 there is a blessing the teacher can use today before dismissal. You may wish to make copies now of Christmastime's Psalm, on page 144.

INTRODUCTION

As the winter days grow shorter, darkness seems to take over our world. That is why lights are important to us during Advent and Christmastime. Jesus is coming! Jesus is like the sun, bringing light and warmth.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Luke 1:26–32, 34–35, 38

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth *(NAZ-uh-reth)* in Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)* with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. The angel greeted Mary and said, "You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."

Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. Then the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was."

Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen? I am not married!"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God."

Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What words in this reading tell us who Jesus is? What is Mary's response to God's plan?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*Hymnal for Catholic Students*, page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

MONDAY PRAYER

December 20, 1999

➧ Reminder: This week you may want to use the blessing on page 140 when the class is dismissed for Christmas break.

INTRODUCTION

In today's "O Antiphon" *(AN-tih-fon),* we call Jesus the "Key of David." People with keys are often people with authority. King David once held authority over the whole people of Israel. He united them and brought peace to the land.

We call Jesus a key. He will unlock the gate of God's kingdom for us.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

➧ turn to page 112

READING

Revelation 3:7–8, 11

Listen to the words of the book of Revelation:

The Lord says this: "I am the one who is holy and true, and I have the keys that belonged to David. When I open a door, no one can close it. And when I close a door, no one can open it. Listen to what I say.

"I know everything you have done. And I have placed before you an open door that no one can close. You were not very strong, but you obeyed my message and did not deny that you are my followers.

"I am coming soon. So hold firmly to what you have, and no one will take away the crown that you will be given as your reward."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What door might Jesus be holding open for us? What do I have that Jesus wants me to hold on to? Is there something I want Jesus to unlock?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O Key of David, O royal power of Israel,
 controlling at your will the gate of heaven:
Come, unlock the prison walls of death
 for those who dwell in darkness
  and the shadow of death,
 and lead your captive people into freedom.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*Hymnal for Catholic Students,* page 166, verse 5)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
 to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

➧ put out the candles of the Advent wreath

TUESDAY PRAYER

December 21, 1999

Reminder: You may wish to make copies now of Christmastime's Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer on pages 144 to 146.

INTRODUCTION

In today's "O Antiphon" we call Jesus the "dawn." Now, during the shortest days of the year, while darkness seems to be powerful, we call on God to be our light. From now on we move toward spring. As days get longer, light begins to triumph over darkness! Jesus is our "sun of justice" and the "light of the world."

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 60:19–22

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

The LORD says this:
You won't need the light of the sun
or the moon.
I, the LORD your God, will be your eternal
light and bring you honor.
Your sun will never set or your moon go down.
I, the LORD, will be your everlasting light,
and your days of sorrow will come to an end.
Your people will live right
and always own the land;
they are the trees I planted
to bring praise to me.
Even the smallest family
will be a powerful nation.
I am the LORD, and when the time comes,
I will quickly do all this.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

We pray to Jesus our Light at Christmastime and at Eastertime. What connections do we see between those seasons?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*Hymnal for Catholic Students*, page 166, verse 6)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candles of the Advent wreath

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

December 22, 1999

INTRODUCTION

In today's "O Antiphon" we call Jesus our keystone. The keystone is the stone in the middle of an arch. It supports the other stones so that the arch doesn't fall down.

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus is also called a cornerstone. The cornerstone of a building is perfectly straight, so that the walls built on it can be strong and true.

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

➧ turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 28:16–17

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

The Lord says this:
"I'm laying a firm foundation
for the city of Zion.
It's a valuable cornerstone proven
to be trustworthy;
no one who trusts it will ever be disappointed.
Justice and fairness will be the measuring lines
that help me build."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In what ways is Jesus like the keystone of my life? How is Jesus like the cornerstone of the church? What other images suggest the strength, integrity and reliability of a building?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O King of all the nations,
the only joy of every human heart:
O Keystone of the mighty arch of humankind,
come and save the creature
you fashioned from the dust.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*,
page 166, verse 7)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

➧ put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

THURSDAY PRAYER

December 23, 1999

Reminder: On page 140 there is a blessing the teacher can use before dismissal today.

INTRODUCTION

The ancient morning prayer for this day begins, “Behold, all things spoken by the angel concerning the Virgin Mary are now fulfilled.” The weeks of planning and waiting are almost over. In school and at home, we will try to be patient for another day until Christmas comes and the days of rejoicing begin.

The prayer today is one that we are ready for. It is “O Emmanuel!” “O God with us!”

A PSALM FOR ADVENT

turn to
page 112

READING

Isaiah 7:13–14

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Then Isaiah said:
“Listen, every one of you in the royal family of David. The LORD will give you proof. A virgin is pregnant; she will have a son and will name him Emmanuel.”

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Mary and Joseph are ready. Zechariah *(zek-uh-RYE-uh)* and Elizabeth are ready. They are prepared for the coming of the saving love of God. Are we prepared? Do we mean it when we pray “Come, Lord Jesus”?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver,
desire of the nations,
Savior of all people,
come and set us free, Lord our God.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing “O come, O come, Emmanuel”
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*,
page 166, verse 1)

Lord our God, you bring light and joy
to the darkness of this world.
Let us carry your light in our hearts this day.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

put out the candles
of the Advent wreath

A Blessing before Christmas Break

Shortly before dismissal, the students gather so that the teacher will be able to bless each one.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

TEACHER
May the Lord's face shine on us,
and may the Lord guide our feet
into the way of peace.

Blessed be the name of the Lord,
now and forever.

ALL
Amen.

TEACHER
Let us put ourselves into the hands of the Lord
and pray that God will bless us
and our families
during the coming holy days.

May each of us help to make our home
a place of joy, love, peace and safety.

May we be generous and considerate,
not thinking only about ourselves
but helping others enjoy the blessings
of Christmas.

Please respond "Amen" as I bless each of you.

▶ the teacher goes to each student in turn,
places a hand on the student's head
or shoulder, and says:

N., go with God.

ALL
Amen.

▶ when these individual blessings
are completed,
prayer continues:

TEACHER
My dear friends and students,
may almighty God give you light and joy.
And, until we gather here again,
may God bless all of us:

ALL

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

▶ end with a hymn such as "The King of glory"
(*Hymnal for Catholic Students*, page 193)
or "Shalom chaverim" (page 177)

CHRISTMASTIME

Saturday, December 25, to Sunday, January 9

CHRISTMASTIME
1999–2000

■ ABOUT THE SEASON

It is hard for Christians, whether they are adults or children, to remember that it is not gifts under the tree that make Christmas so important. If the presents were the only things we looked forward to, then when the presents were opened, Christmas would be over for us.

LOOKING AHEAD

But Christmastime is not just one day. It is a season of nearly three weeks after December 25. Many good days come during Christmastime. There is, of course, the opening of the Great Jubilee Year on Christmas Day. And there is Holy Family Day, Saint John's Day and the feast of the Holy Innocents, too.

And this year there is a very important event. On January 1 we turn our calendars to the year 2000, the day we begin a new century and a new millennium. There will be many celebrations in our city and around the world, but we will want to pay special attention to the religious celebrations that welcome this "year of jubilee." On January 1 we also celebrate the solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. The Christmas season draws to a close with the feasts of the Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord.

Most of these days are spent at home during the school break. But when we come back, there is still a week of Christmastime left to celebrate at school with our friends. We can talk to one another about the events of the vacation. We can keep the season from ending too soon. We can balance the prayers of preparation that we shared during Advent with the prayers of celebration we will share during this joyful time.

▪ CHRISTMASTIME IS A CELEBRATION OF PROMISES KEPT AND PROPHECIES FULFILLED. During Advent, we heard Isaiah's prophecy of a savior who would be sent from God. During Christmastime, at home and at church, we hear the good news of the birth of that savior, Jesus of Nazareth.

We take this week of Christmastime to learn what it means to celebrate a year of jubilee. The book of Leviticus tells us that during this time debts are forgiven, slaves are freed, the land is cared for and the poor are given a new chance. The book of Revelation reminds us that with the coming of Jesus all things have been made new.

▪ SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, IS THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD. This is one of the greatest feasts of the church. In many parts of the world, Epiphany is the merriest day of Christmastime. We do what we can to make it one of the happiest days of the year.

The word "epiphany" means "showing." We rejoice that the glory of God is shown through Jesus our Savior. That glory is shown to the Magi who came from far away and followed the star to Bethlehem. The wise men are the first of many people who would seek Jesus and find him.

The Magi are not the only ones who discover the glory of God. Jesus showed God's glory in many ways to many people. The followers of John saw the heavens opened on the day Jesus was baptized in the Jordan. The voice of God was heard, and this voice invited all those who saw Jesus to listen to his message.

The feast of the Baptism of the Lord is Sunday, January 9. It closes the Christmas season and prepares us to follow the teachings of Jesus during the coming year.

■ PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMASTIME

The Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Christmastime are found on pages 18, 19 and 20 of *Blessed Be God!* If the students do not use *Blessed Be God!* prayers may be photocopied from pages 144, 145 and 146 of this book. Use these prayers for this final week of Christmastime.

You will use a new set of prayers beginning on January 10, when Ordinary Time begins. You might copy both sets of prayers at the same time. The next

set, for the rest of January, is found on pages 160 to 162 in this book.

- PUT A CANDLE IN THE PRAYER CENTER. You will light it for Daily and Weekly Prayer, and also for Prayer at the End of the Day.

You may want to add Christmas decorations to your prayer center. A fresh wreath, evergreens, and bright red and gold ribbons can be used. Of course, the stable will now have all its statues added. Don't forget the Blessing of the Stable on page 147.

Be sure to wait until after Christmastime to take down any decorations. See if you can figure out a way to keep the classroom looking cheerful all through the winter. The end of the Christmas season should not be sad. In fact, some people leave their Christmas stable up until February 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, or Candlemas, as it is also called.

- CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE. Unless we know our past, we will find it difficult to express our hope for the future. Therefore, in preparation for the year of Jubilee, spend some time looking back at our 2000-year history as a church. Learn about the many ways our people have found to follow Jesus. Act out the lives of saints. Collect pictures of turning points in our history. Create a "church family album." Ask grandparents to tell about what the church was like when they were your age. Make a banner. Bury a time capsule.

Look ahead. What will the church be like 100 years from now? What does the church need right now? How will you add to the church's life? As you join in Jubilee projects in your family, school, parish or city, rejoice that we have been given the time to turn again to Jesus and work for the coming of his kingdom. It has been 2000 years since Jesus became "Emmanuel," "God with us." As we celebrate, let us pray, in the words of Dag Hammarskjold, "For all that has been — Thanks! To all that shall be — Yes!" A Prayer for a Time of Jubilee is on page 148. It needs some preparation, so give yourself enough time.

- SUGGESTED HYMNS: The Closing of prayer includes the singing of "Joy to the world" (page 146 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*). Isaac Watts based this hymn on Psalm 98. This is our Psalm for Christmastime. Another hymn based on that psalm is "Sing a new song" (page 179 in the hymnal). This is a song to learn for the Jubilee.

There are many beautiful Christmas hymns and carols that we can sing during the season. "O come, all ye faithful" (page 164 in the hymnal) is a hymn for Christmas. "Songs of thankfulness and praise" (page 188) is a hymn for Epiphany. "Go tell it on the mountain" (page 128) and "The canticle of Zachary" (page 8) are good hymns for the Jubilee. "Gloria" (page 128) and "Jubilate Deo" *(you-bee-LAH-tay DAY-oh,* page 147) are lively Jubilee songs, especially when they are sung as rounds.

THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

If you kept the spirit of Advent and did not have a party before Christmas, you might want to use your first gathering after Christmas break for a celebration. Enjoy some holiday food. Invite some musicians to help you sing Christmas carols and Jubilee hymns. You can begin this celebration with the Blessing of the Stable (page 147) or the Prayer for a Time of Jubilee (page 148).

A PSALM FOR CHRISTMASTIME

Psalm 98:1 – 3

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem!
ALL **The glory of the Lord shines upon you.**

light a candle,
and then say:

LEADER God's holy day has dawned for us at last.
ALL **Come, all you peoples, and adore the Lord.**
SIDE A Sing to the Lord a new song,
the Lord of wonderful deeds.
Right hand and holy arm
brought victory to God.
SIDE B God made that victory known,
revealed justice to nations,
remembered a merciful love
loyal to the house of Israel.
ALL **The ends of the earth have seen**
the victory of our God.
LEADER God's holy day has dawned for us at last.
ALL **Come, all you peoples, and adore the Lord.**
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

CHRISTMASTIME

MEAL PRAYER

MATH
ART
KATIE

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ➧ all make the sign of the cross

LEADER Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem!
ALL **The glory of the Lord shines upon you.**
LEADER God's holy day has dawned for us at last.
ALL **Come, all you peoples, and adore the Lord.**
Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts
which we are about to receive
from your bounty.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

➧ all make the sign of the cross

CHRISTMASTIME

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem!
ALL **The glory of the Lord shines upon you.**

light a candle,
and then say:

LEADER The angels rejoiced at the coming of Jesus.
We, too, rejoice. And we sing:

use music from the liturgy
or the refrain from a Christmas carol
to sing this response:

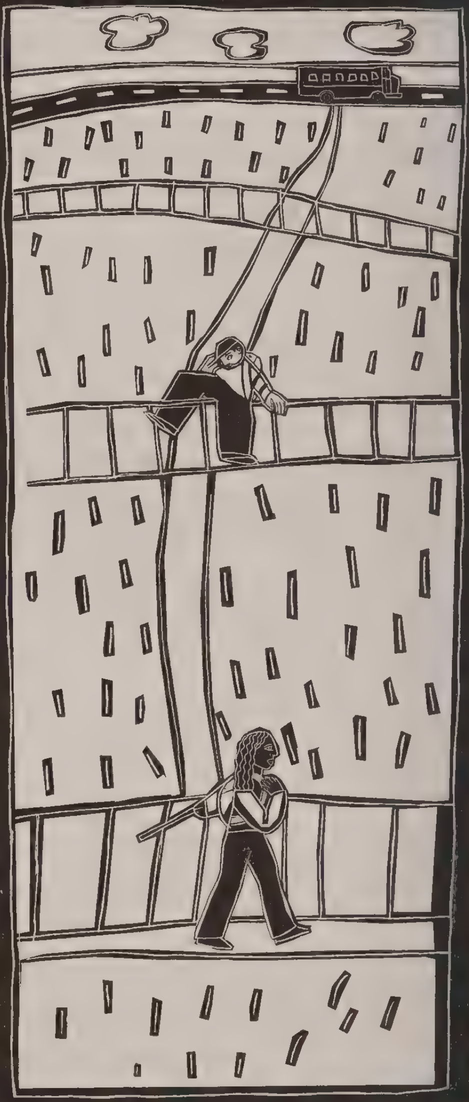
ALL **Glory to God in the highest,**
and peace to God's people on earth.
LEADER The shepherds came to worship Jesus.
We, too, worship Jesus. And we sing:
ALL **Glory to God . . .**
LEADER The Magi offered good gifts to Jesus.
We, too, bring gifts to Jesus. And we sing:
ALL **Glory to God . . .**

LEADER hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the light of Christ shine through us
for others:

ALL all make
the sign
of the cross

at the end of prayer,
put out the candle



A Blessing of the Stable

This is a blessing for the first class meeting after Christmas Day. The stable is set up with only the figures of Mary, Joseph, the manger and the animals. The students are ready to put the figures of Jesus, the angels and the shepherds in place. Begin with silence, but end with carols.

LEADER
Come, Lord Jesus!

ALL
Come quickly!

LEADER
My friends, let us be silent for a moment to prepare ourselves to hear the good news.

➧ allow a minute or two of silence,
then light a candle;
the reader begins to read:

READER Luke 2:5–14
Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem *(BETH-luh-hem)*. She was soon going to have a baby, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

➧ place the figure of Jesus in the manger,
then continue the reading:

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying in a manger."

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said:
"Praise God in heaven!
Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God."

The gospel of the Lord.

➧ place the shepherds and angels
near the stable

LEADER
My friends,
let us hold a hand out in blessing.

➧ all hold out a hand
toward the stable

We praise and thank you, O God,
for the coming of Jesus.
Bless these images that tell us
how Mary gave birth to Jesus
and how angels sang the good news
to the shepherds.
May we always give you thanks
through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

➧ sing Christmas
carols

Prayer for a Time of Jubilee

Place an icon of Jesus beside the Christmas candle. Give everyone a copy of A Psalm about Time (or substitute the Christmastime Psalm, on page 144).

Students need to prepare two things: First, plan a creative reflection on the church's past—as simple or as complex as time and talent allow. It might be pictures, a story, drama, dance or a litany of saints. Second, reflect on the church's future, and write intentions for its next thousand years. If there are many, sing "Lord, send out your Spirit" (page 63 in the hymnal) after every third or fourth petition. Decorate the area with petitions written on wide ribbons attached to banner poles or on large calendar-like pages.

sing "Gloria" in rounds
(page 128 of the hymnal)
as the group assembles;
use rhythm instruments, bells and chimes

Introduction

A time of jubilee has come! We rejoice that in Jesus, God's love has been revealed to the whole world. United with Jesus, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have lived as God's church for 2000 years. Today we look back and remember our history. We also look forward to the new millennium, and pray with confidence for the church's future.

A Psalm about Time

adapted from Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

LEADER
Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem!

ALL
The glory of the Lord shines upon you.

light a candle,
and then say:

LEADER
There is an appointed time for everything,

ALL
A time for every purpose under the heavens.

SIDE A
A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to dance and a time to cry.
A time for winter and a time for spring;
A time for study and a time to sing.

SIDE B
A time to wonder and a time to know;
A time to love and a time to grow.
A time to keep and a time to share;
A time for work and a time for prayer.

SIDE A
A time to join and a time to part;

SIDE B
A time to end a thing and a time to start.

LEADER
There is an appointed time for everything,

ALL
A time for every purpose under the heavens.

LEADER
God's holy day has dawned for us at last.

ALL
Come, all you peoples, and adore the Lord.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

Reading

Matthew 28:18–20

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world."

The gospel of the Lord.

Reflection on the Church's Past

LEADER
Let us tell the story of our people, the church.

➧ present the story of the church;
then continue:

Lord our God,
you are with your people
  in every time and in every place,
  as they preach your good news,
  as they try to live according to your word,
  as they sin and repent and begin again.
At the opening of this year of jubilee,
  we thank you for all that has been,
  and we trust in you for all that is still to come.
We praise you though Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

Prayers for the Church's Future

LEADER
As we reflect on God's saving mercy,
  and look forward to the coming centuries
  of the church's life,
let us remember these intentions:

➧ offer petitions;
then continue:

God of wisdom and mercy,
  hear and answer the prayers of your church.
Strengthen us with your saving power
  now and for ever.

ALL
Amen.

Closing

LEADER

➧ hold out one hand
over the gathering

Loving God,
  bless, guide and protect your church,
  and when time is ended
  bring us all into the glory of your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ all sing "Go tell it on the mountain" (page 128 in the hymnal) or "Sing a new song" (page 179); use rhythm instruments, bells and chimes

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, January 2, 2000

Reminder: Today you may want to use the Blessing of the Stable, page 147, or the Prayer for a Time of Jubilee, page 148.

INTRODUCTION

Merry Christmastime and a happy jubilee year! Sunday, January 2, is the feast of Epiphany *(eh-PIF-uh-nee),* a day on which we rejoice that the Savior is revealed to all who truly seek him.

A PSALM FOR CHRISTMASTIME

turn to
page 144

READING

Matthew 2:1–2, 8–9, 11–12

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)* and said, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

Herod told them, "Go to Bethlehem *(BETH-luh-hem)* and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too."

The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense *(FRANK-in-sens),* and myrrh *(mer)* and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Where have I found Jesus my Savior? Who has been like a star leading me to Jesus?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
bless your church during this year of jubilee,
and teach us to care for the earth,
seek peace, grant forgiveness,
and work for justice.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "Joy to the world"
(Hymnal for Catholic Students,
page 146)

May the light of Christ
shine through us for others,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

MONDAY PRAYER

January 3, 2000

Reminder: Use the Blessing of the Stable, page 147, and the Prayer for a Time of Jubilee, page 148, this week.

INTRODUCTION

It is a Hebrew tradition to declare a year of jubilee. It is a time for peacemaking, for forgiving, for putting things back the way they should be. The year 2000 has been declared a time of jubilee by Pope John Paul II.

During this year we will try to think about things from God's point of view. We will look at our world and notice some of the problems that we might solve. And we will listen to others, especially the poor.

A PSALM FOR CHRISTMASTIME

turn to
page 144

READING

Leviticus 25:8, 9–10, 13–15, 23

Listen to the words of the book of Leviticus *(luh-VIT-uh-kus):*

Once every forty-nine years on the Great Day of Forgiveness, trumpets are to be blown everywhere in the land. This fiftieth year is sacred—it is a time of freedom and of celebration when everyone will receive back their original property, and slaves will return home to their families.

During this year, all property must go back to its original owner. So when you buy or sell farmland, the price is to be determined by the number of crops it can produce before the next Year of Celebration. Don't try to cheat.

No land may be permanently bought or sold. It all belongs to me—it isn't your land, and you only live there for a little while.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I treat the earth, and its creatures as if they were borrowed from God? What are we doing to recycle and reuse items?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
bless your church during this year of jubilee,
and teach us to care for the earth,
seek peace, grant forgiveness,
and work for justice.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "Joy to the world"
(page 146 in the hymnal)

May the light of Christ
shine through us for others,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

TUESDAY PRAYER

January 4, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Elizabeth Ann Seton, the church's first North American saint.

She was a widow with five children when she began a religious order of women to teach in parish schools. At that time Catholic children were not welcome in public schools. Elizabeth Seton is known as the founder of America's parochial *(puh-ROW-kee-ul)* schools.

A PSALM FOR CHRISTMASTIME

turn to
page 144

READING

Leviticus 25:35, 36–43

Listen to the words of the book of Leviticus *(luh-VIT-uh-kus):*

If any of your people become poor and unable to support themselves, you must help them. Don't take advantage of them by charging any kind of interest or selling them food for profit. Instead, honor me by letting them stay where they now live. Remember—I am the LORD your God! I rescued you from Egypt and gave you the land of Canaan, so that I would be your God.

Suppose some of your people become so poor that they have to sell themselves and become your slaves. Then you must treat them as servants, rather than as slaves. And in the Year of Celebration they are to be set free, so they and their children may return home to their families and property. I brought them out of Egypt to be my servants, not to be sold as slaves. So obey me, and don't be cruel to the poor.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I sometimes "take advantage" of others? How do people our age sometimes try to use or control others?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
bless your church during this year of jubilee,
and teach us to care for the earth,
seek peace, grant forgiveness,
and work for justice.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "Joy to the world"
(page 146 in the hymnal)

May the light of Christ
shine through us for others,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

January 5, 2000

INTRODUCTION

On this day of the Christmas season we remember Saint John Neumann *(NEW-mun)*. In 1836, John came to America from what is now the Czech *(chek)* Republic. He owned only the clothes he wore and a suitcase of books. He had heard that priests were needed in America and he wanted very much to become a priest.

John Neumann did become a priest, and later a bishop. He brought great energy and learning to the work of God.

A PSALM FOR CHRISTMASTIME

➧ turn to page 144

READING

Romans 12:4–8

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

A body is made up of many parts, and each of them has its own use. That's how it is with us. There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another.

God has also given each of us different gifts to use. If we can prophesy *(PRAH-fuh-sye)*, we should do it according to the amount of faith we have. If we can serve others, we should serve. If we can teach, we should teach. If we can encourage others, we should encourage them. If we can give, we should be generous. If we are leaders, we should do our best. If we are good to others, we should do it cheerfully.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What gifts and talents do I have? How have I shared those talents with the church? What gifts does the church have that it can share with the whole world during this year of jubilee?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
bless your church during this year of jubilee,
and teach us to care for the earth,
seek peace, grant forgiveness,
and work for justice.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "Joy to the world" (page 146 in the hymnal)

May the light of Christ
shine through us for others,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

➧ put out the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

January 6, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today is the ancient day of Epiphany *(eh-PIF-uh-nee)*, although in North America we celebrate it on a Sunday. For many Christians, this is the day gifts are given, because the Epiphany gospel mentions the gifts that were brought by the wise men.

In Puerto Rico *(PWER-toe REE-ko)* children leave hay in their shoes for the wise men's camels and find gifts there the next morning. In every country, this feast helps us celebrate the coming of Jesus.

A PSALM FOR CHRISTMASTIME

▶ turn to
page 144

READING

Isaiah 9:2–3, 6

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)*:

Those who walked in the dark
have seen a bright light.
And it shines upon everyone
who lives in the land of darkest shadows.
Our LORD, you have made
your nation stronger.
Because of you, its people are glad and
celebrate like workers at harvest time
or like soldiers dividing up
what they have taken.
A child has been born for us.
We have been given a son who will be our ruler.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Have I made plans for the new year? What can I do to make things better than ever at home? at school? for the people of the world?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
bless your church during this year of jubilee,
and teach us to care for the earth,
seek peace, grant forgiveness,
and work for justice.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "Joy to the world"
(page 146 in the hymnal)

May the light of Christ
shine through us for others,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

▶ put out
the candle

FRIDAY PRAYER

January 7, 2000

▶ Reminder: A new season begins Monday. Make copies of the Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer on pages 160 to 162.

INTRODUCTION

Christians use a calendar that begins with the coming of Christ, 2000 years ago. But they also measure time by the earth's rotation around the sun. Christians use that sun calendar for the work of business and government. Both kinds of calendars tell something about who we are.

For Jews this is the year 5760. For Muslims this is the year 1420. Both groups measure time by the moon. With the rising of the new moon tonight, the Muslim holy month of Ramadan *(RAH-muh-don)* will end and the great feast of Id al-Fit'r will begin.

Today's reading tells what it will be like when the measuring of time is finished, and all people are gathered at the throne of God.

A PSALM FOR CHRISTMASTIME

▶ turn to
page 144

READING

Revelation 21:1–5

Listen to the words of the book of Revelation:

I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and so had the sea. Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband.

I heard a loud voice shout from the throne: "God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone forever."

Then the one sitting on the throne said: "I am making everything new."

The word of the Lord.

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  bless your church during this year of jubilee,
  and teach us to care for the earth,
  seek peace, grant forgiveness,
    and work for justice.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "Joy to the world"
(page 146 in the hymnal)

May the light of Christ
  shine through us for others,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

▶ put out
the candle

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, January 9, 2000

Reminder: Before your next meeting, make copies of January's Psalm on page 160

INTRODUCTION

On most Sundays this year we will hear a reading from the gospel of Mark. Mark's gospel does not begin with the birth of Jesus. It shows Jesus the way his early disciples first saw him. Those disciples were followers of John the Baptist, and one day Jesus came to join them.

We will hear about their meeting in our reading today. It is the Gospel for Sunday, January 9, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

A PSALM FOR CHRISTMASTIME

turn to
page 144

READING

Mark 1:7–11

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

John the Baptist told the people, "Someone more powerful is going to come. And I am not good enough even to stoop down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!"

About that time Jesus came from Nazareth *(NAZ-uh-reth),* and John baptized him in the Jordan River. As soon as Jesus came out of the water, he saw the sky open and the Holy Spirit coming down to him like a dove.

A voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What did it mean when John baptized people? What does baptism mean to our parish? Have I ever asked my family why I was baptized?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  bless your church during this year of jubilee,
  and teach us to care for the earth,
  seek peace, grant forgiveness,
    and work for justice.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "Joy to the world"
(page 146 in the hymnal)

May the light of Christ
  shine through us for others,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

JANUARY

Monday, January 10, to Monday, January 31

ORDINARY TIME JANUARY 2000

ABOUT THE MONTH

Christmastime is over. Now things get back to normal. In the language of prayer, this normal time is called Ordinary Time. This means that the church is between seasons.

But "ordinary" is not the same as "unimportant." We do not disappear between holidays. We do not stop eating or studying or growing. We do not stop praying or caring about one another. And we do not stop being God's dearest children.

LOOKING AHEAD

So, during Ordinary Time we still try to do ordinary things well. We will try to pray well, and we will try to do our schoolwork well. We will also have a chance to enjoy the feasts and festivals that occur in January and February.

- WE WANT TO PRAY EACH TIME WE GATHER. Perhaps we could improve our prayer in some way for this new year of 2000. Should we sing more? Are we taking turns? Can we hear the readers? Do the leaders need to prepare a little better? Are we in too much of a hurry when we pray? Does anyone have good ideas for improvement?

- DURING JANUARY, NATURE CAN BE HARSH. Cold winds blow. Layers of extra clothing begin to get annoying. For us the winter can seem too long. For many people, however, winter is not just long. It is the hardest time of the year. We want to remember that hungry and homeless people need our help. Our help may be a matter of life and death to them. People need the most help after Christmastime, especially if the weather turns bad for a long time. Perhaps we can learn how our parish helps people in trouble.

- OUR READINGS FOR DAILY PRAYER WILL TRACE AN IMPORTANT EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL. Long before Jesus was born, Israel was invaded by other nations. Jewish cities were destroyed, and the people were taken captive. These terrible events tested their faith. Why did God allow this to happen? When would things get better? The prophets urged the people to be hopeful and patient. They said that one day the Lord would send a savior.

We will follow this story as it unfolds in the second book of Kings and in the book of Daniel. Then next month we will read what some of the prophets wrote during this same period.

PREPARATION FOR JANUARY

The Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Ordinary Time in January are on pages 21, 22 and 23 in the student booklet *Blessed Be God!* If students do not use *Blessed Be God!* the Psalm and Prayers for January may be photocopied. These prayers are found in this book on pages 160, 161 and 162.

- MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY IS CELEBRATED ON MONDAY, JANUARY 17. We may want to prepare something special for that holiday.

- THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY LASTS FROM JANUARY 18 TO JANUARY 25. As a class we can pray for the unity of all Christian churches. A prayer for Christian unity is found on page 169.

- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK IS JANUARY 30 TO FEBRUARY 5. No doubt there are special events and celebrations planned for that week.

January is dedicated to peace. Perhaps we can share pictures and stories of famous peacemakers. There may be peacemakers in our families who help others get along and calm people down when things get tense. We can tell their stories too.

We will find the themes of religious unity and racial harmony in the prayers each day. There may be additional opportunities during the month to have activities or discussions about peace and cooperation among people.

- THE PRAYER CENTER CAN BE MADE NEW WITH A CLOTH OR A NEW RELIGIOUS PICTURE. If you put up some signs of winter during Advent, such as pine cones or paper snowflakes, they can remain, or new signs can be added.

- SUGGESTED HYMNS: "Sing a new song" (page 179 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) is a hymn of gladness that can help chase away the winter blues.

Learn a new melody for the "alleluia." A good one that you might choose is the "Celtic alleluia" (page 75 in the hymnal).

During the Week of Christian Unity, we can sing "In Christ there is no east or west" (page 141 in the hymnal). The melody of this song is a spiritual that Martin Luther King sang many times. Another famous spiritual is "We shall overcome" (page 203 in the hymnal).

On the last day of January and the first days of February, the Closing of prayer each day includes the first verse of Psalm 27, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; of whom should I be afraid?" These words can be even more powerful if they are sung. Music can be found on page 59 of the hymnal. Someone with a good voice can sing the words first, and then everyone can repeat them. You can even repeat the verse twice.

It is good to sing all the verses of a hymn if that is possible. Why? Because the words of most hymns are poems. When we skip verses, the poem isn't complete. The ideas or attitudes that the poem expresses aren't complete. Also, when songs are short, we sometimes don't have enough time to pick up their spirit.

■ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

In winter, many students are absent from classes. We get colds and flu. It is dark out and cold. It might be easier to keep up our enthusiasm if we make a fresh start on the routines of our class sessions.

Perhaps more responsibility for the preparation and leadership of prayer can be shared among students. Perhaps we can tell about favorite religious rituals kept in our families. Special attention might be paid to the saints and heroes of this month.

- THE READINGS FOR WEEKLY PRAYER ARE TAKEN FROM THE SUNDAY GOSPELS. In Ordinary Time in 2000, the church reads through Mark's gospel Sunday by Sunday, with occasional readings from the gospel of John.

Through the eyes of Mark and John we are able to see that Jesus is the Messiah sent by God. He calls us, along with the four fishermen of Galilee, to follow him.

- THE BLESSING OF CANDLES (ON PAGE 191) CAN TAKE PLACE ANY TIME DURING THE WEEK THAT ENDS JANUARY AND BEGINS FEBRUARY, even though the feast of Candlemas, or the Presentation of the Lord, as it is also called, falls on Wednesday, February 2.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

Psalm 8:2, 4–10

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Lord our God, the whole world tells
the greatness of your name.

ALL **Your glory reaches beyond the farthest star.**

SIDE A I see your handiwork
in the heavens:
the moon and the stars
you set in place.

SIDE B What is humankind
that you remember them,
the human race
that you care for them?

SIDE A You treat them like gods,
dressing them in glory and splendor.
You give them charge of the earth,
laying all at their feet:

SIDE B Cattle and sheep,
wild beasts,
birds of the sky,
fish of the sea.

LEADER Lord our God, the whole world tells
the greatness of your name.

ALL **Your glory reaches beyond the farthest star.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

➧ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

JANUARY

MEAL PRAYER

MATH
SPANISH
KATIE

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER We thank you, God, for the gift of life.
And we thank you for all that helps us grow.
Lord, we hunger for bread,
and we hunger for justice.

ALL **Lord, have mercy.**

LEADER Christ, we hunger for freedom,
and we hunger for peace.

ALL **Christ, have mercy.**

LEADER Lord, we hunger for your love,
and we hunger for your kingdom.

ALL **Lord, have mercy.**
Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts
which we are about to receive from your bounty.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

JANUARY

END OF THE DAY PRAYER

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER For the circles of your universe
we bless you,
Maker of suns and seasons.
While winter brings rest and renewal
to the land,
open our eyes every day to marvel
at what is lovely in these weeks,
to see also those who need shelter
and warmth
and swiftly to help them.
In the beauty and the fierceness of winter
be praised, our Lord, for ever and ever.

ALL **Amen.**

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

MONDAY PRAYER

January 10, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Ordinary Time in January are in *Blessed Be God!* on pages 21 to 23.

INTRODUCTION

Today we begin to read about a very sad time in the history of Israel. The country has split in two. The northern part is called Israel, and the southern part is called Judah *(JOO-duh)*. Israel has been defeated by enemy armies. Now Judah, too, is threatened.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

2 Kings 24:8, 10, 12, 13, 15–16, 14

Listen to the words of the second book of Kings:

Jehoiachin *(juh-HOY-uh-kin)* was eighteen years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled only three months from Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)*. King Nebuchadnezzar *(NEB-uh-kud-NEZ-er)* sent troops to attack Jerusalem soon after Jehoiachin became king. Jehoiachin immediately surrendered.

The LORD had warned that someday the treasures would be taken from the royal palace and from the temple, including the gold objects that Solomon had made for the temple. And that's exactly what Nebuchadnezzar ordered his soldiers to do.

Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon *(BAB-uh-lon)*, along with his mother, his wives, his officials, and the most important leaders of Judah. He also led away seven thousand soldiers, one thousand skilled workers, and anyone who would be useful in battle. Only the very poorest people were left in Judah.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

We have seen pictures of people who leave their homes because of war. How must they feel? What can be done to help refugees who lose their country, homes and jobs?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God,
  you have brought us to this day
  as to a gift of great value.
Let it be for us a day of rejoicing.
In the quiet of our hearts
    and the work of this day,
  be with us, Lord, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

January 11, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Our reading today continues the story of the defeat of the land of Judah *(JOO-duh)*. After Jehoiachin *(juh-HOY-uh-kin)* was taken to Babylon *(BAB-uh-lon)*, his brother Zedekiah *(zed-uh-KYE-uh)* became king. Each year he had to send gold and silver to Babylon and this kept the country of Judah poor. Finally, Zedekiah led a rebellion, and Babylon's army was sent against him.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

2 Kings 25:1–3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 21

Listen to the words of the second book of Kings:

In Zedekiah's *(zed-uh-KYE-uhz)* ninth year as king, King Nebuchadnezzar *(NEB-uh-kud-NEZ-er)* led his entire army to attack Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)*. The troops set up camp outside the city and built ramps up to the city walls. After a year and a half, all the food in Jerusalem was gone. Then the troops broke through the city wall.

That same night, Zedekiah and his soldiers tried to escape, but the troops caught up with them near Jericho *(JER-ih-ko)*. Zedekiah's eyes were then poked out, and he was put in chains and dragged off to Babylon *(BAB-uh-lon)*.

The troops burned down the LORD's temple, the king's palace, and every important building in the city, as well as all the houses. They led away as prisoners the people left in the city. The people of Judah no longer lived in their own country.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why did these kings go to war? What are the causes of some of the wars in the news today? What are some results of war?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God,
you have brought us to this day
as to a gift of great value.
Let it be for us a day of rejoicing.
In the quiet of our hearts
and the work of this day,
be with us, Lord, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

January 12, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The church calls the time between Christmas and Lent "Ordinary Time." But calling this time "ordinary" does not give us an excuse to be dull and boring. This time is an opportunity to pay special attention to the ordinary joy and beauty of our lives.

Today's reading tells about Daniel. He was one of those taken to Babylon *(BAB-uh-lon)* when the kingdom of Judah was defeated. These events happened more than 500 years before Jesus was born.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Daniel 1:3–6

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

One day King Nebuchadnezzar *(NEB-uh-kud-NEZ-er)* ordered his highest palace official to choose some young men from the royal family of Judah and from other leading Jewish families.

The king said, "They must be healthy, handsome, smart, wise, educated, and fit to serve in the royal palace. Teach them how to speak and write our language, and give them the same food and wine that I am served. Train them for three years, and then they can become court officials."

Four of the young Jews chosen were Daniel, and three of his friends, all from the tribe of Judah *(JOO-duh)*.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Daniel and his friends were slaves. They could not go home. They could not choose their work. How free is my family? What kinds of freedom do I have?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God,
you have brought us to this day
as to a gift of great value.
Let it be for us a day of rejoicing.
In the quiet of our hearts
and the work of this day,
be with us, Lord, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

January 13, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The Jewish people have a number of religious rules about food. Some foods are forbidden, and some foods must be prepared only in a certain way. Foods that are prepared correctly are called kosher *(KO-sher)* foods. Faithful Jews, like Daniel, are careful to follow these rules. Even though the food prepared in the palace kitchen must have been very good to eat, it was not kosher. Daniel would not eat it.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Daniel 1:8, 10, 11–16

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

Daniel made up his mind to eat and drink only what God had approved for his people to eat. He asked the king's chief official for permission not to eat the food and wine served in the royal palace. But the man told him, "The king has decided what you must eat and drink. And I am afraid he will kill me, if you eat something else and end up looking worse than the other young men."

So Daniel said to the guard, "For the next ten days, let us have only vegetables and water at mealtime. When the ten days are up, compare how we look with the other young men, and decide what to do with us." The guard agreed to do what Daniel had asked.

Ten days later, Daniel and his friends looked healthier and better than the young men who had been served food from the royal palace. After this, the guard let them eat vegetables instead of the rich food and wine.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Catholics avoid food for one hour before receiving communion. How is this like the Jewish rules about food? Which religious customs would be important to me if I were suddenly put among people of a different faith?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God,
  you have brought us to this day
  as to a gift of great value.
Let it be for us a day of rejoicing.
In the quiet of our hearts
    and the work of this day,
  be with us, Lord, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

January 14, 2000

Reminder: Monday is Martin Luther King Day. You may want to prepare copies of A Prayer for Christian Unity, on page 169

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Martin Niemoeller *(NEE-muller)*. He was a Lutheran minister when the Nazi *(NOT-zee)* party came to power in Germany. He spoke out against the persecution of Jews. When he encouraged other leaders to do the same, he was put in prison until the Nazis were defeated in war.

At the age of 90 he was still traveling the world and speaking out for peace and human rights. Martin died in 1984.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to page 160

READING

Daniel 1:19–20; 2:2–3, 4–5, 10, 12–13

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

Daniel and his three friends were given positions in the royal court. From then on, whenever the king asked for advice, he found their wisdom was ten times better than that of any of his other advisors and magicians.

The king called in his counselors, advisors, magicians, and wise men, and said, "I am disturbed by a dream that I don't understand." They answered, "Please tell us your dream, and we will explain what it means."

But the king replied, "No! I have made up my mind. If you don't tell me both the dream and its meaning, you will be chopped to pieces."

His advisors explained, "Your Majesty, you are demanding the impossible!" This made the king so angry that he gave orders for every wise man to be put to death, including Daniel and his three friends.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I have friends like this king, who boss me around or have fits of temper? Do I do any of these things?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God,
you have brought us to this day
as to a gift of great value.
Let it be for us a day of rejoicing.
In the quiet of our hearts
and the work of this day,
be with us, Lord, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, January 16, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm for January is on page 21 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

This week we pray for unity and justice among all peoples. Monday's holiday honors Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who helped African Americans win fair treatment in this country. On Tuesday, Christians in the United States begin a week of prayer for unity among their churches.

Perhaps we can celebrate this week of concern for unity by telling some stories of people who worked for peace and justice. It is an important part of being a follower of Jesus.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

John 1:35–38, 39, 40–41, 42

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

John the Baptist was with two of his followers. When he saw Jesus walking by, he said, "Here is the Lamb of God!" John's two followers heard him, and they went with Jesus.

When Jesus turned and saw them, he asked, "What do you want?" They answered, "Rabbi, where do you live?" Jesus replied, "Come and see!"

One of the two men who had heard John and had gone with Jesus was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother and tell him, "We have found the Messiah!" Andrew brought his brother to Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Andrew carried important news to his brother, Simon Peter. Do I share things with my relatives? How do I think Andrew felt when his brother became the leader of the apostles?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you call us each by name
  and speak to us in the quiet of our hearts.
Speak to us of love for all people.
Speak to us of hope for our world.
Speak to us of your gift of salvation.
Speak to us, for we are listening.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

A Prayer for Christian Unity

Gather around the baptismal font or a bowl of water from the font. Bring a branch for sprinkling and copies of January's Psalm. Begin and end with a song, such as "In Christ there is no east or west" or "Lord, you give the great commission."

Introduction

All who are baptized in Jesus Christ form one body, one church. Although we now see many churches, all who live in Christ are called to unity through the Holy Spirit.

We begin by praying the Psalm for January.

A Psalm for January

turn to
page 160

Reading

Ephesians 4:3–5

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Try your best to let God's Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living at peace. All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people. We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

The word of the Lord.

Blessing with Baptismal Water

Let us bless the Lord with all the saints
who show us what it is
to live as followers of Christ.
Let us all say: Thanks be to God.
Thanks be to God.

For Martin Luther, Teresa of Avila
and all who speak out for reform
in the churches,
let us bless the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

For Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero
and all who suffer for the sake of justice,
let us bless the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

For Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day
and all who serve the poor and homeless,
let us bless the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

For Harriet Tubman, John Wesley
and all who preach and sing to the glory of God,
let us bless the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

the leader holds out one hand
toward the baptismal water and says:

Jesus, our Lord and Messiah,
we praise you for giving us new birth
in the waters of baptism.
Deepen the faith and strengthen the unity
of our churches,
until we meet around one table
to proclaim your kingdom now and for ever.
Amen.

sprinkle the community with baptismal
water; all sing "alleluia" during the sprinkling

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

all sing
a closing song

MONDAY PRAYER

January 17, 2000

INTRODUCTION

On this day our nation remembers the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. He led African Americans in their struggle for civil rights. He preached Christian love and peacefulness. He tried to win justice without using violence.

People of all races, all countries and all religions really can love one another and work together. Let us do our part to make this happen. Today's reading is taken from Jesus' prayer for unity among his followers.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

➧ turn to page 160

READING

John 17:1, 20–22

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus looked up toward heaven and prayed, "Father, I am not praying just for these followers. I am also praying for everyone else who will have faith because of what my followers will say about me. I want all of them to be one with each other, just as I am one with you and you are one with me. I also want them to be one with us. Then the people of this world will believe that you sent me.

"I have honored my followers in the same way that you honored me, in order that they may be one with each other, just as we are one."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I have friends who belong to different ethnic groups or different neighborhoods? Do I ever make fun of people who are different from me? What have I done to promote good feelings and understanding between my friends and people from other groups?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
and fill us with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

January 18, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today begins the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This is a time to pray that all Christian churches will someday be united. People of all races, of all countries and of all religions really can love one another and work together. Are we doing our part to make this happen?

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

John 10:3–5, 14–16

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said: "The sheep know their shepherd's voice. He calls each of them by name and leads them out. When he has led out all of his sheep, he walks in front of them, and they follow, because they know his voice. The sheep will not follow strangers. They don't recognize a stranger's voice, and they run away.

"I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me. Just as the Father knows me, I know the Father, and I give up my life for my sheep. I have other sheep that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them together too, when they hear my voice. Then there will be one flock of sheep and one shepherd."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I have friends who belong to a different faith? Do I discuss ideas about God with them? What activities does our parish share with other churches in our neighborhood?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
  heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
  and fill us with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

January 19, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Wulfstan, who served as a bishop in England for 32 years. When the Norman army defeated England in 1066, Wulfstan helped his Saxon people to overcome their anger toward the invaders.

When Bishop Wulfstan died, he was one of the most respected men in England. He had lived through stormy times, yet he never lost his vision of peace and unity for his country.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Daniel 2:12–13, 16–19, 30, 47

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

King Nebuchadnezzar *(NEB-uh-kud-NEZ-er)* gave orders for every wise man to be put to death, including Daniel and his three friends. Daniel rushed off and said to the king, "If you will just give me some time, I'll explain your dream."

Daniel returned home and told his three friends. Then he said, "Pray that the God who rules from heaven will be merciful and explain this mystery, so that we and the others won't be put to death."

In a vision one night, Daniel was shown the dream and its meaning. Then Daniel said to the king, "You must realize that these mysteries weren't explained to me because I am smarter than everyone else. Instead, it was done so that you would understand what you have seen."

The king said, "Now I know that your God is above all other gods and kings, because he gave you the power to explain this mystery."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

God is sometimes revealed to people in dreams. What ways has God been revealed to me? Do I ever pray quietly so God can touch my heart?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
heal all that divides us.
Teach us to work together.
Guide us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
and fill us with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

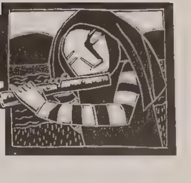
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

January 20, 2000



INTRODUCTION

The church has been guided by many wise popes. Saint Fabian *(FAY-bee-un)* was one of them. According to Saint Cyprian *(SIP-ree-un)*, who knew him, Fabian was a very holy man. In 236, Fabian was chosen to be pope even though he wasn't a bishop, or even a priest.

Pope Fabian divided the city of Rome into seven parts, and appointed a deacon for each part. The deacons were to care for the poor. The Christian faith was more valuable to Pope Fabian than life itself. He was put to death for his faith in the year 250.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

▶ turn to page 160

READING

Daniel 3:1, 4–9, 12

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

King Nebuchadnezzar *(NEB-uh-kud-NEZ-er)* ordered a gold statue to be built ninety feet high and nine feet wide.

Then an official stood up and announced: "People of every nation and race, now listen to the king's command! Trumpets, flutes, harps, and all other kinds of musical instruments will soon start playing. When you hear the music, you must bow down and worship the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Anyone who refuses will at once be thrown into a flaming furnace." As soon as the people heard the music, they bowed down and worshiped the gold statue.

Some Babylonians *(BAB-uh-LOW-nee-unz)* used this as a chance to accuse the Jews to the king. They said, "Your Majesty, those Jews refuse to worship your gods and the statue you have set up."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why wouldn't the Jews bow down to the statue? Have I ever refused to do the wrong thing? What are some hard decisions that people I know have had to make?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
and fill us with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

January 21, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Agnes. She was only 12 when she was killed for her faith. In the Latin language, the name Agnes sounds like "agnus," which means "lamb." So Saint Agnes reminds people of lambs.

In Rome, several lambs are blessed on this day. Their wool is later used to make stoles for new bishops.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Daniel 3:13–19

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

King Nebuchadnezzar *(NEB-uh-kud-NEZ-er)* was furious. So he sent for the three young men, and said, "I hear that you refuse to worship my gods and the gold statue I have set up. Now I am going to give you one more chance. If you bow down and worship the statue when you hear the music, everything will be all right. But if you don't, you will at once be thrown into a flaming furnace. No god can save you from me."

The three men replied, "Your Majesty, we don't need to defend ourselves. The God we worship can save us from you and your flaming furnace. But even if he doesn't, we still won't worship your gods and the gold statue you have set up."

The king's face twisted with anger at the three men. And he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Things look bad for the three men. Do I show my trust in God without expecting a reward? Do I trust God even when things look hopeless?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
and fill us with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel of Sunday, January 23, 2000

Reminder: February 2 is Candlemas. Next week you may want to use the Blessing of Candles, found on page 191.

INTRODUCTION

People who tell the truth are not always popular. John the Baptist told people to give up their sins. The rulers did not want to hear this, so they had John killed. This ended John's voice but not his message. Soon Jesus was telling everyone to repent and turn to God.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Mark 1:14–20

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)* and told the good news that comes from God. He said, "The time has come! God's kingdom will soon be here. Turn back to God and believe the good news!"

As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were fishermen and were casting their nets into the lake.

Jesus said to them, "Come with me! I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish." Right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him.

Jesus walked on and soon saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee *(ZEH-beh-dee)*. They were in a boat, mending their nets. At once Jesus asked them to come with him. They left their father in the boat with the hired workers and went with him.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What things do people sometimes leave so that they can follow Jesus? Would I leave what I own to follow Jesus?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
and fill with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

January 24, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember a holy bishop, Saint Francis de Sales. He lived at a time when Christians were fighting over the meaning of their faith. Francis brought many people back to the peace and love that Jesus taught. He is a good saint to remember during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Today we turn again to the book of Daniel. When we left our story on Friday, Daniel's friends had refused to worship the gold statue.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

▶ turn to page 160

READING

Daniel 3:20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27–28, 29

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

The king commanded some of his strongest soldiers to tie up the men and throw them into the flaming furnace. So the soldiers tied up [the three friends of Daniel] and threw them into the flaming furnace with all of their clothes still on. The fire was so hot that flames leaped out and killed the soldiers.

Suddenly the king jumped up and shouted, "Weren't only three men tied up and thrown into the fire? But I see four men walking around in the fire. None of them is tied up or harmed, and the fourth one looks like a god."

The king said to the three young men, "You servants of the Most High God, come out at once!" They came out. The men were not burned, their hair wasn't scorched, and their clothes didn't even smell like smoke. The king said, "Praise their God for sending an angel to rescue his servants! No other god has such great power to save."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The church tells this story every Lent. Why is this a good Lenten story? What other stories in the Bible tell about the God of Israel rescuing the people from disaster?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
  heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
  and fill us with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

January 25, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we celebrate the Conversion of Saint Paul. Paul was an important missionary of the early church. His feast day ends our Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Amazingly, in the years before Paul helped the church, he attacked it. Our reading today tells about Paul's conversion. In the Hebrew language, Paul's name was Saul.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Acts 22:4, 6–8

Listen to the words of the book of the Acts of the Apostles:

Paul said, "I made trouble for everyone who followed the Lord's Way, and I even had some of them killed. I had others arrested and put in jail. I didn't care if they were men or women.

"One day about noon I was getting close to Damascus *(duh-MASS-kus)*, when a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice asking, 'Saul, Saul, why are you so cruel to me?'

"'Who are you?' I answered.

"The Lord replied, 'I am Jesus from Nazareth *(NAZ-uh-reth)!* I am the one you are so cruel to.'"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What did Paul discover about Jesus on the road to Damascus? Does thinking about the unity of Christ with his followers help me to treat other people with kindness?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
and fill us with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

January 26, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember two of Saint Paul's companions: Timothy and Titus. Timothy became the first bishop of the city of Ephesus *(EF-uh-sus),* and Titus became the first bishop of the island nation of Crete *(kreet).*

In the Bible there are two letters from Paul to Timothy and one letter from Paul to Titus. The letters show Paul's great respect for his two friends, and his respect for the important part bishops play in the life of the church.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Daniel 6:3, 5–6, 7, 9, 10

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

Daniel did his work so much better than the other governors and officials that the king decided to let him govern the whole kingdom.

The other men said to one another, "We will never be able to bring any charge against Daniel, unless it has to do with his religion." They all went to the king and said, "Your Majesty, all of your officials agree that you should make a law forbidding anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next thirty days. Everyone who disobeys this law must be thrown into a pit of lions."

So the king made the law and had it written down. But in the same way that he had always done, Daniel knelt down in prayer three times a day, giving thanks to God.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why did some of the king's officials want to get rid of Daniel? Was the law fair? Why did the king make the law?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Living God,
your power and your kingdom will never end.
Strengthen our faith.
Guide us in prayer
as you guided your servant Daniel.
Teach us to proclaim your goodness
and to rely always on your protection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

January 27, 2000

Reminder: Make copies of February's Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer, on pages 186 to 188. Wednesday is Candlemas: Use the blessing on page 191. Talk this over with the teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the feast of Saint Angela Merici *(mer-EE-chee)*. Angela lived about 500 years ago. In those days only boys could go to school, but Angela decided that it was a good idea to teach girls, too. She began by teaching them about God. She believed that the knowledge of God is the foundation of all our learning.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Daniel 6:11, 13–15, 15–17

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

The men who had spoken to the king watched Daniel and saw him praying to his God for help.

The men then told the king, "That Jew named Daniel, who was brought here as a captive, refuses to obey you or the law that you ordered to be written. And he still prays to his god three times a day." The king was really upset to hear about this, and for the rest of the day he tried to think how he could save Daniel.

At sunset the men returned and said, "Your Majesty, remember that no written law can be changed, not even by the king." So the king ordered Daniel to be brought out and thrown into a pit of lions. But he said to Daniel, "You have been faithful to your God, and I pray that he will rescue you." A stone was rolled over the pit, and it was sealed.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why didn't the king save his friend Daniel? Do I know anyone who has done something bad that they didn't want to do? How do we help each other make good choices?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Living God,
your power and your kingdom will never end.
Strengthen our faith.
Guide us in prayer
as you guided your servant Daniel.
Teach us to proclaim your goodness
and to rely always on your protection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

January 28, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Thomas Aquinas *(uh-KWYE-nus),* who had a difficult life. His little sister was killed by lightning. His parents abandoned him. Classmates called him a "dumb ox," and people in the monastery *(MAH-nuh-steh-ree)* where he lived made fun of his weight. The books he wrote were at first condemned by the church.

But Thomas continued to work hard, to pray deeply and to love God with his whole heart. Later, people understood the power of his ideas. Today, his works are studied all over the world, and he is the patron of students and schools. Thomas's trust in God helps us to understand the meaning of today's reading.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Daniel 6:19–21, 22, 23, 24, 25–27

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

At daybreak the king got up and ran to the pit. He was anxious and shouted, "Daniel, you were faithful and served your God. Was he able to save you from the lions?"

Daniel answered, "Your Majesty, my God knew that I was innocent, and he sent an angel to keep the lions from eating me." The king gave orders for him to be taken out of the pit. And the king ordered the men who had brought charges against Daniel to be thrown into the pit.

The king then sent this message to all people of every nation and race in the world: "I command everyone in my kingdom to worship and honor the God of Daniel. He is the living God, the one who lives forever. His power and his kingdom will never end. He rescues people and sets them free by working great miracles."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why is "the living God" a good title for Daniel's God? Who is the real hero of the stories about Daniel and his friends?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Living God,
your power and your kingdom will never end.
Strengthen our faith.
Guide us in prayer
as you guided your servant Daniel.
Teach us to proclaim your goodness
and to rely always on your protection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, January 30, 2000

Reminder: You may want to make copies of February's Psalm, on page 186. A Blessing of Candles is on page 191.

INTRODUCTION

The reading today has two parts. First, we learn that Jesus taught in the Jewish meeting place and amazed the people with his authority. This means that he knew what he was talking about.

Next Jesus sent an evil spirit out of a man, and the people saw that he healed by God's power. The reading shows Jesus teaching about good and evil, and then breaking the power of evil.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to
page 160

READING

Mark 1:21–22, 23–27

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus and his disciples went to the town of Capernaum *(kuh-PER-nee-um)*. Then on the next Sabbath he went into the Jewish meeting place and started teaching. Everyone was amazed at his teaching. He taught with authority. Suddenly a man with an evil spirit in him entered the meeting place and yelled, "Jesus from Nazareth *(NAZ-uh-reth)*, what do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are! You are God's Holy One."

Jesus told the evil spirit, "Be quiet and come out of the man!" The spirit shook him. Then it gave a loud shout and left.

Everyone was completely surprised and kept saying to each other, "What is this? It must be some new kind of powerful teaching! Even the evil spirits obey him."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What forms of evil do we see in the world today? Is it ever difficult for me to remember that God's goodness is stronger than evil? In what ways does God use our efforts to overcome evil?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
you call us your children
and remain with us in times of trouble.
Defend us against evil.
Make us brave and faithful,
strengthen us to act justly,
and teach us to live together in peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

January 31, 2000

Reminder: The Presentation of the Lord is February 2. You may want to bless candles from home. A blessing is on page 191.

INTRODUCTION

Catholic Schools Week began yesterday. There probably will be interesting events planned for us and our families during the coming days. We can use this opportunity to make our school a place of welcome, joy and peace.

Today we remember Saint John Bosco, who died in 1888. John spent his life helping teens in the poor neighborhoods of Turin, Italy. He even did acrobatic tricks and tightrope-walking to get their attention so that he could talk to them about Jesus. He became a great teacher and a holy priest.

A PSALM FOR JANUARY

turn to page 160

READING

Isaiah 60:1–4, 5

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

Jerusalem, stand up! Shine!
Your new day is dawning.
The glory of the LORD shines brightly on you.
The earth and its people
are covered with darkness,
but the glory of the LORD is shining upon you.
Nations and kings will come to the light
of your dawning day.
Open your eyes! Look around!
Crowds are coming.
When you see this, your faces will glow;
your hearts will pound and swell with pride.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why is the symbol of a new day so appealing? Have we been able to keep a spirit of Christian joyfulness even though Christmastime is over? How is the glory of the Lord shining on the world right now?

CLOSING

Psalm 27:1

Let us all repeat:
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?

Let us remember these intentions:

Be a light to your people, Lord,
and lead them when the road is dark.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"

FEBRUARY

Tuesday, February 1, to Mardi Gras, March 7

ORDINARY TIME FEBRUARY 2000

■ ABOUT THE MONTH

No matter what corner of the country you live in, February just does not have as much personality as some of the other months. It is a month of flu bugs and "winter blahs."

LOOKING AHEAD

The beginning of something is almost always exciting. We pay more attention to things that are new. But now our school year is about half over. We are in the middle.

Middles can be more difficult than beginnings or endings. School work is not more difficult. Being respectful to each other is not more difficult. It's just that we sometimes don't find these things as interesting as we once did. Our most important job now is to stay alert, to stay interested, and at least to stay awake!

There are some festivities in February that can brighten the winter. On Tuesday, February 2, we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord. On the next day we remember Saint Blase. February 5 is Chinese New Year, and Monday, February 14, is Valentine's Day. The following Monday, February 21, is Presidents' Day.

Winter Ordinary Time is very long this year. It is more than eight weeks from the end of Christmastime to Ash Wednesday. Some years Ash Wednesday occurs early in February, but this year it does not come until March 8. The prayers for the first few days of March, which include Mardi Gras, are included in this February section of the book. Mardi Gras and the days preceding it are a festival of food and fun that help us to get ready for Lent which begins on Ash Wednesday.

▪ FEBRUARY IS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH. Since 1926, Americans have taken some time during this month to remember the contributions that African Americans have made to this country. This time of the year was chosen because it is the month of the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Do you know why these two people are important in American history?

▪ THE READINGS FOR DAILY PRAYER WILL BE TAKEN FROM THE WRITINGS OF SEVERAL PROPHETS. During January, our readings from the book of Daniel told about the invasion of foreign armies into the lands of Israel and Judah. These readings gave us a glimpse of the suffering of the Hebrew people when they were taken in chains to Babylon.

During February we will hear from some of the prophets who ministered during those sad times. Micah comforted the poor, who were abused by the rulers of Judah. Jeremiah predicted the fall of Jerusalem, which turned the people against him. Ezekiel, like Daniel, was deported to Babylon. Habakkuk tried to help people accept the disaster as part of God's plan. Zechariah and Zephaniah wrote in later years, when the people were struggling to rebuild Jerusalem. They strengthened the people's hope in the Messiah God would send to lead them. All the prophets of this period tell their people to have courage and trust God to save them.

As February ends and March begins we read the parable of Jonah, a reluctant prophet. The story is told with humor but it teaches an important lesson. Those who know God's love and God's truth must share it with others.

The ninth week of Ordinary Time begins with two days to enjoy a carnival spirit before we enter the season of Lent.

■ PREPARATION FOR FEBRUARY

If it is your custom, remember to make copies of the Psalm for February, the Meal Prayer and the End of the Day Prayer (see pages 186, 187 and 188). If you are using *Blessed Be God!* these prayers are found on pages 24 to 26.

- ON FEBRUARY 2 WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD, WHICH IS ALSO CALLED "CANDLEMAS." Forty days after Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary brought him to Jerusalem. They met two prophets there, Simeon and Anna, who understood that Jesus was the Messiah.

Simeon called Jesus the "light of revelation." So some people bring their "lights," candles, to Mass on Candlemas for a blessing. There is a prayer on page 191 to use if you wish to bless candles for the classroom and candles brought from home. This can be done on any day close to the feast.

Some people leave their Bethlehem scene up until February 2. On Candlemas they tuck a few flowers into its straw as promises of spring. Then, at the end of the day, the stable is packed away.

You might know February 2 as "Groundhog Day." According to legend, on Candlemas even animals hope for spring! That's why the groundhog peeks out of its burrow to check the weather.

- THE DAYS BEFORE ASH WEDNESDAY ARE THE TIME OF CARNIVAL, A TIME FOR FUN BEFORE LENT BEGINS. We can bring the Carnival spirit into the classroom. Some crepe-paper streamers can do a lot to change the room and lift the spirits.

At Carnival we should have something good to eat too. The Carnival feast says, "Spring is coming!" In the old days during Lent, adults gave up eating meat. The word "carnival" means "good-bye to eating meat."

The last day of Carnival, March 7, is Mardi Gras *(MAR-dee grah)*. These are the French words for "Fat Tuesday," a day when many people eat pancakes and doughnuts. Perhaps we can share some in the classroom. On the next day, Ash Wednesday, the season of Lent begins.

We can end Carnival with a ritual of saying farewell to the alleluia. We will not sing that happy song again until we rejoice at Easter. The ritual is on page 222.

- SUGGESTED HYMNS: A beautiful Irish melody is used in the song "Lord of all hopefulness" (page 155 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*).

On Candlemas we can sing Christmas carols one last time. Because of this feast, in early February our prayers often mention light. We can sing "This little light of mine" (page 196 in the hymnal), an African American spiritual. "All creatures of our God and king" (page 100 in the hymnal) and "Jubilate Deo" (*you-bee-LAH-tay DAY-oh,* page 147 in the hymnal) are good songs for Carnival because they have many alleluias.

At Daily Prayer during the first days of the month we can sing the words "The Lord is my light . . ." (from Psalm 27). Music is on page 59 of the hymnal.

■ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The middle of winter can be difficult. The weather may be harsh, and there are often many absences because of illness. This is a good time for spirit-building events, such as Candlemas and Mardi Gras.

At your meeting closest to February 2, you may want to bless candles using the blessing on page 191. The week of February 14 almost always brings special celebrations. The Blessing for Saint Valentine's Day on page 202 can be a part of the fun.

Be sure to bring the spirit of Carnival to your last meeting before Lent. That certainly will bring a boost to the spirit! Tuesday Prayer for March 7 might be used at this meeting even if you do not meet on a Tuesday. The Farewell to the Alleluia (on page 222) can be the final moment of the festivities.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

Psalm 146:1 – 2, 5 – 9

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Praise the Lord, my heart!
My whole life, give praise.
ALL **Let me sing to God as long as I live.**
SIDE A They are wise who depend on God,
who look to Jacob's Lord,
SIDE B creator of heaven and earth,
maker of the teeming sea.
SIDE A The Lord keeps faith for ever,
giving food to the hungry,
SIDE B justice to the poor,
freedom to captives.
SIDE A The Lord opens blind eyes
and straightens the bent,
SIDE B comforting widows and orphans,
protecting the stranger.
LEADER Praise the Lord, my heart!
My whole life, give praise.
ALL **Let me sing to God as long as I live.**
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

▶ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

FEBRUARY

MEAL PRAYER

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make the sign of the cross

LEADER Praise the Lord, my heart!
My whole life, give praise.
ALL **Let me sing to God as long as I live.**
LEADER Blessed are you, Lord:
You have fed us from our earliest days.
You give food to every living creature.

Fill our hearts with joy and delight.
Let us always have enough
and something to spare
for works of mercy
in honor of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Through Christ may glory, honor and power
be yours for ever and ever.
ALL **Amen.**

▶ all make the sign of the cross

END OF THE DAY PRAYER

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER God, come to my assistance.
ALL **Lord, make haste to help me.**
LEADER Our help is in the name of the Lord:
ALL **Who made heaven and earth.**
LEADER May God, ever wakeful,
keep you from stumbling;
the guardian of Israel
neither rests nor sleeps.

God shelters you from evil,
securing your life.
God watches over you near and far,
now and always.

▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

Psalm 121:2–4, 7–8

TUESDAY PRAYER

February 1, 2000

Reminders: Tomorrow is Candlemas. A blessing for this day is on page 191. February's Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer are on pages 24 to 26 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

In our reading today Isaiah announces that the savior to come will bring light and hope to all. This helps us look to tomorrow's feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple. There, Jesus was recognized as the light of the world. On this Tuesday in Catholic Schools Week, let us try to be light to one another.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Isaiah 42:1, 4, 6–7

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

The LORD says this:
"Here is my servant!
  I have made him strong.
He is my chosen one;
  I am pleased with him.
I have given him my Spirit,
  and he will bring justice to the nations.
He won't quit or give up
  until he brings justice everywhere on earth.
I chose you to bring justice,
  and I am here at your side.
I selected and sent you to bring light
  and my promise of hope to the nations.
You will give sight to the blind;
you will set prisoners free
  from dark dungeons."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

God's servant will bring light and hope to all nations. What kind of light do nations need today? How can I be a light?

CLOSING

Psalm 27:1

Let us all repeat:
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
  of whom should I be afraid?

Let us remember these intentions:

Be a light to your people, Lord,
  and lead them when the road is dark.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

February 2, 2000

Reminder: You can use the prayer on page 191 to bless candles today.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the feast of the Presentation of the Lord. Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple 40 days after he was born. He was greeted there by the prophets Simeon *(SIM-ee-un)* and Anna. They knew that he was the Messiah, the light of the world.

Today is also called "Candlemas" because candles are blessed on this day. We can sing carols to renew our Christmas spirit.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Luke 2:25–27, 27–32

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Simeon *(SIM-ee-un)* was a good man. He loved God and was waiting for God to save the people of Israel. God's Spirit came to him and told him that he would not die until he had seen Christ the Lord.

When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple, the Spirit told Simeon to go into the temple. Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God,

"Lord, I am your servant,
and now I can die in peace,
because you have kept your promise to me.
With my own eyes I have seen
what you have done to save your people,
and foreign nations will also see this.
Your mighty power is a light for all nations,
and it will bring honor to your people Israel."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why are some people who have had a glimpse of God, not afraid to die? Where can I see glimpses of God?

CLOSING

Psalm 27:1

Let us all repeat:
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?

Let us remember these intentions:

Be a light to your people, Lord,
and lead them when the road is dark.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

A Blessing of Candles

This blessing can be used at any time, but especially on Candlemas, February 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

Candles used in the prayer center may be blessed along with any candles students bring from home. All the candles are gathered in one place, such as on a table or desk covered with a beautiful cloth. At least one candle should be lighted before the blessing begins. Older students might hold lighted candles.

It is an old custom on Candlemas to put a few spring flowers near the statue of the Christ child from the nativity set.

You can sing the words "The Lord is my light . . ." from Psalm 27. The music is found on page 59 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students. *Begin and end this blessing by singing a Christmas carol, such as "Joy to the world."*

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Jesus Christ is the light of the world,
a light no darkness can overpower!

Let us all repeat:
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?

ALL
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?

LEADER
On the day of baptism, we were given a lighted candle with these words: "Walk always as children of the light, and keep the flame of faith alive in your hearts."

Let us now renew that faith and ask God to bless these candles. They are a sign of Christ, who is light and life to us.

➧ hold out one hand
over the candles in blessing,
and say:

God our Creator and Redeemer,
bless these candles
as signs of your presence
and signs of our faith.
In the beauty of your holy light,
keep us in quiet and in peace.
Keep us safe and turn our hearts to you
that we may be light for our world.
All praise be yours through Christ,
the light of nations, the glory of Israel,
now and forever.

ALL
Amen.

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

THURSDAY PRAYER

February 3, 2000

INTRODUCTION

On this Thursday in Catholic Schools Week, we remember Saint Blase *(blaze)*. Legend tells us that Blase was a doctor as well as a bishop. He once healed a boy who was choking on a fish bone. Because of that, Blase is the patron of people who suffer from illnesses of the throat.

It is a custom to pray for good health with a blessing of throats on this day.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

John 1:1, 3–7, 9

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

In the beginning was the one
who is called the Word.
The Word was with God and was truly God.
Everything that was created received its life
from him,
and his life gave light to everyone.
The light keeps shining in the dark,
and darkness has never put it out.
God sent a man named John,
who came to tell about the light
and to lead all people to have faith.
The true light that shines on everyone
was coming into the world.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why does John call Jesus the "Word"? What kind of darkness would try to put out this light? How has Jesus brought light to me?

CLOSING

Psalm 27:1

Let us all repeat:
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
of whom should I be afraid?

Let us remember these intentions:

Be a light to your people, Lord,
and lead them when the road is dark.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

February 4, 2000

INTRODUCTION

In this year 2000, we have been learning new things about the way people measure their time around the world. Tomorrow is New Year's Day in many countries of Asia which follow a lunar calendar. The Chinese people call this the year of the Dragon, 4698. The Dragon is a sign of energy and enthusiasm.

Vietnamese people will welcome the new year tomorrow with a religious festival called Tet. It is a time for families to decorate their homes with ornaments, lights and bells, to worship together in temples, and to visit friends and relatives and exchange gifts and good wishes for long life and happiness.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

➧ turn to page 186

READING

Matthew 5:14–16

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lampstand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

If Jesus is a light for the world why should we expect to be a light for the world also? What does it mean to bring light to people who are sad? What people can I go to for light when I am troubled?

CLOSING

Psalm 27:1

Let us all repeat:

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
  of whom should I be afraid?
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
  of whom should I be afraid?

Let us remember these intentions:

Be a light to your people, Lord,
  and lead them when the road is dark.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, February 6, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm for February is in *Blessed Be God!*, page 24.

INTRODUCTION

The gospels for the four Sundays of February this year show Jesus lifting burdens from suffering people. He heals illness and restores people to their families. He forgives sins and sends away evil spirits. He even eases the burden of some religious laws. But as busy as his life became, Jesus always kept some time for prayer.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Mark 1:30 - 34, 35, 37 – 38

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus was told that Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with fever. Jesus went to her. He took hold of her hand and helped her up. The fever left her, and she served them a meal.

That evening after sunset, all who were sick or had demons in them were brought to Jesus. In fact, the whole town gathered around the door of the house. Jesus healed all kinds of terrible diseases and forced out a lot of demons.

Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray. When Simon and the others found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you!"

Jesus replied, "We must go to the nearby towns, so that I can tell the good news to those people. This is why I have come."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Jesus was very busy, but he took time to pray. Do I pray every day? Is there a quiet place I could use for prayer?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Living God,
  through Jesus you heal us
  and free us from the darkness of evil.
Be close to us in danger,
  bring us peace when we are troubled,
  and listen to our prayers.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

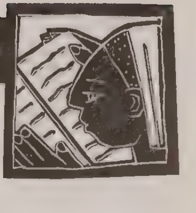
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

February 7, 2000



INTRODUCTION

We have heard that many centuries before the coming of Jesus, the people of God were attacked by their enemies. The prophets told the people that they should not rely on their army alone to protect them. Their salvation was in the hands of God. The prophets urged them to take an honest look at their lives, and the life of their community, and see how far they had drifted from the law of God.

This was the message of Ezekiel *(ee-ZEE-kee-ul)*, a prophet who was taken to Babylon in chains when Israel was defeated.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

➧ turn to page 186

READING

Ezekiel 18:20–21, 22–23, 30, 32

Listen to the words of the prophet Ezekiel *(ee-ZEE-kee-ul):*

The LORD says this:
"Good people will be rewarded for what they do, and evil people will be punished for what they do.

"Suppose wicked people stop sinning and start obeying my laws and doing right. All their sins will be forgiven, and they will live because they did right. I, the LORD God don't like to see wicked people die. I enjoy seeing them turn from their sins and live.

"I will judge each of you for what you've done. So stop sinning, or else you will certainly be punished. I, the LORD God, don't want to see that happen to anyone. So stop sinning and live!"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Ezekiel tells us that God is always ready to forgive. Am I ever too ashamed to ask God to forgive me? Am I always willing to forgive others?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
you forgive us with all your heart
for the wrong we do.
Help us to forgive those who wrong us.
Help us to make peace in our families,
our schools and our neighborhoods.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

February 8, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Jerome Emiliani *(aye-mee-lee-AH-nee),* an Italian priest. In Jerome's time, a terrible disease was killing people. When their parents died, children had no place to go. So Jerome took them into his home. He began many homes for children without parents.

Let us join our prayers today to those of Saint Jerome. Let us remember all children who have lost a parent, who are abused or neglected, or who have no place to live.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Ezekiel 28:25–26

Listen to the words of the prophet Ezekiel *(ee-ZEE-kee-ul):*

The LORD God said:
"Someday I will gather the people of Israel from the nations where they are now scattered, and every nation will see that I am holy. The Israelites will once again live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob. They will be safe and will build houses and plant vineyards *(VIN-yerdz).* They will no longer be in danger, because I will punish their hateful neighbors. Israel will know that I am the LORD their God."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Many times since Ezekiel wrote these words, the Jews have been persecuted, murdered, enslaved or exiled from their homes. How are Jews spoken of in my neighborhood? Do I defend people when they are unjustly treated?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
you call us your children
and remain with us in difficulties.
Defend us against evil.
Make us brave and faithful,
and strengthen us in times of trouble.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

February 9, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Caedmon *(KED-mun)*, a poet who could not read or write. Caedmon tended cows and stayed by himself most of the time. He was ashamed that he could not sing or play the harp or entertain people as most young men did. In a dream one night a man told him to sing about the wonders of creation, and when he woke up, he sang a long poem in praise of God. From then on he was able to make up poems about the Christian faith. He became a monk, and as fast as Abbess Hilda could teach him stories from the Bible, he put those stories into wonderful poems that he sang to the people who came to listen.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Ezekiel 33:10–12

Listen to the words of the prophet Ezekiel *(ee-ZEE-kee-ul):*

The LORD said:
"Ezekiel, son of man, the people of Israel are complaining that the punishment for their sins is more than they can stand. They have lost all hope for survival, and they blame me. Tell them that as surely as I am the living LORD God, I don't like to see wicked people die. I enjoy seeing them turn from their sins and live. So if the Israelites want to live, they must stop sinning and turn back to me.

"Tell them that when good people start sinning, all the good they did in the past cannot save them from being punished. And remind them that when wicked people stop sinning, their past sins will be completely forgiven, and they won't be punished."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Am I happy when disobedient people are forgiven or do I like to see them punished? Is it fair for God to forgive us over and over? Do I hold grudges against people who injure me?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
you forgive with all your heart
the wrong that we do.
Help us to forgive those who wrong us.
Help us to make peace in our families,
our schools and our neighborhoods.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

February 10, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Scholastica *(sko-LAS-tick-uh)*. Almost fifteen hundred years ago, she opened a convent for women. She and her twin brother, Benedict, taught a way of life that is still followed today by women and men all over the world. They are called Benedictines *(ben-ih-DICK-tinz)*.

Benedictines have a special love for liturgy *(LIT-ur-gee)*. In this country they have worked to bring beautiful worship to every parish.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Ezekiel 34:25 – 27

Listen to the words of the prophet Ezekiel *(ee-ZEE-kee-ul):*

The Lord God said:
"The people of Israel are my sheep, and I solemnly promise that they will live in peace. I will chase away every wild animal from the desert and the forest, so my sheep will not be afraid. They will live around my holy mountain, and I will bless them by sending more than enough rain to make their trees produce fruit and their crops to grow. I will set them free from slavery and let them live safely in their own land. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The people of God longed to go home again. How do I show respect for my home? Have we made this class a place where everyone feels at home? How does our parish help the homeless?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

As sheep are guarded by the watchful shepherd,
as chicks are tended by the mother hen,
as eaglets are sheltered
by the wings of the mother eagle,
we rest secure in the arms of God.
For unchanging mercy, O God, we praise you.
For unending love we give you thanks,
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

February 11, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The people in exile became very discouraged. Their nation was defeated and their cities were ruined. Families were scattered and many people were lost. They lived as slaves, and they could not worship their God. They were like dead people, without life and without hope.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

▶ turn to page 186

READING

Ezekiel 37:1, 4–5, 7–10, 11–12, 14

Listen to the words of the prophet Ezekiel *(ee-ZEE-kee-ul):*

The Lord's Spirit carried me to a valley full of bones. He then told me to say: "Dry bones, listen to what the Lord is saying to you, 'I, the Lord God, will put breath in you, and once again you will live.'"

I did what the Lord said, but before I finished speaking, I heard a rattling noise. The bones were coming together! I saw muscles and skin cover the bones, but they had no life in them.

The Lord said, "Ezekiel, now say to the wind, 'The Lord God commands you to blow from every direction and to breathe life into these dead bodies, so they can live again.'"

As soon as I said this, the wind blew among the bodies, and they came back to life!

The Lord said, "Ezekiel, the people of Israel are like dead bones. They complain that they are dried up and that they have no hope for the future. So tell them, 'I, the Lord God, promise to open your graves and set you free. My Spirit will give you breath, and you will live again. I will bring you home, and you will know that I have kept my promise.'"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

To whom do I turn when I feel empty and hopeless? What can this prophecy teach us about our life with God after death?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

As sheep are guarded by the watchful shepherd,
  as chicks are tended by the mother hen,
  as dry bones are given life again,
  we rest secure in the arms of God.
For unchanging mercy, O God, we praise you.
For unending love we give you thanks,
  through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday February 13, 2000

INTRODUCTION

In today's reading Jesus cures a man of a terrible disease, but he warns the man not to tell about it. People who study the Bible are not sure why Jesus wanted his miracles kept secret. Perhaps he did not want people to come to him only for gifts. Perhaps he did not like crowds of people who were only looking for excitement. As we listen to the reading today, we can ask ourselves why we come to Jesus.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Mark 1:40–42, 44–45

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

A man with leprosy *(LEP-ruh-see)* came to Jesus and knelt down. He begged, "You have the power to make me well, if only you wanted to."

Jesus felt sorry for the man. So he put his hand on him and said, "I want to! Now you are well." At once the man's leprosy disappeared, and he was well.

Jesus said, "Don't tell anyone about this. Just go and show the priest that you are well. Then take a gift to the temple as Moses commanded, and everyone will know that you have been healed."

The man talked about it so much and told so many people, that Jesus could no longer go openly into a town. He had to stay away from the towns, but people still came to him from everywhere.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Which came first, the man's faith or his cure? Would his faith have weakened if Jesus had not cured him? Is my faith strong enough to last, even if Jesus does not do all the things I ask?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God, you send men and women
  to bring your love and healing touch
  to all your suffering people.
Bless, protect, and guide them.
Make us truly grateful for your constant care
  and show us the choices that lead
    to eternal life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

February 14, 2000

Reminder: A blessing for Saint Valentine's Day is on page 202. You may want to use it some time today.

INTRODUCTION

Saint Valentine was a bishop who bravely died for his faith. The name Valentine means "valiant" and "brave." This day is connected with love because of a legend that birds pick their mates on February 14. Secret notes of love and friendship sent on this day are called Saint Valentine's notes, or valentines.

Let us be sure to give cards, kisses or hugs to the people whose love makes our lives better. Today's reading tells about true love.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

I Corinthians 13:4–8, 13

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Love is kind and patient,
 never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude.
Love isn't selfish or quick tempered.
It doesn't keep a record of wrongs
  that others do.
Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil.
Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful,
  and trusting.
 Love never fails!

For now there are faith, hope, and love.
But of these three, the greatest is love.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Valentines are messages of love and friendship from one person to another. How can we be God's valentines?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Wise and loving God,
 fill our minds with your word
 so that we may know what is true and right,
 so that we may know what is holy,
 so that we may know your peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

A Blessing for Saint Valentine's Day

Valentines, heart-shaped decorations, posters for the classroom or a plate of Saint Valentine's Day cookies could be blessed.

Students stand or sit in a circle. If valentines are brought, they can be held or placed on the floor in front of their owners. Any containers of food should be in the center.

Begin with a song, such as "This little light of mine" (page 196 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students) *or "Blessed feasts of blessed martyrs" (page 110).*

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
The love of Christ has gathered us together.
Let us all say:
Let us rejoice and be glad.

ALL
Let us rejoice and be glad.

READER — 1 John 4:11–12, 16
Listen to the words of the first letter of John:

Dear friends, since God loved us this much, we must love each other.

No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is truly in our hearts.

God is love. If we keep on loving others, we will stay one in our hearts with God, and he will stay one with us.

The word of the Lord.

LEADER — adapted from *A Book of Family Prayer*
We are children of a loving God.
We carry God's own love in our hearts.
Let us never be afraid to show friendship,
appreciation and love.

➧ hold out one hand in blessing
over the valentines or food,
and say:

God our Creator,
bless the love that brings people together
and grows ever stronger in our hearts.
May all the messages that carry the name
of your holy Bishop Valentine
be sent in good joy
and received in delight.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

➧ sing the same song
you sang at the beginning

TUESDAY PRAYER

February 15, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Ben Salmon, who spent two years in prison for refusing to serve in the military. He was the first Roman Catholic to become a "conscientious objector" *(kon-she-EN-shus ob-JEK-tor)* because of his religion. Most people, even Catholic priests, called Ben Salmon a traitor and a coward. Salmon wrote a book showing that the teachings of Jesus and of the Catholic church urge non-violence.

Today we begin to read from a prophet who was a "conscientious objector" like Ben Salmon. Jeremiah *(jer-uh-MY-uh)* told his people not to fight the army of Babylon. This made them so angry that they put him in prison. His writings tell of the sadness of his times, but he still urges his people to place their faith in God alone.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Jeremiah 29:10–14

Listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah *(jer-uh-MY-uh):*

The LORD said:
"I will be kind and bring you back to Jerusalem, just as I have promised. I will bless you with a future filled with hope—a future of success, not of suffering. You will turn back to me and ask for help, and I will answer your prayers.

"You will worship me with all your heart, and I will be with you and accept your worship. Then I will gather you from all the nations where I scattered you, and you will return to Jerusalem."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Are people at my school called cowards if they refuse to fight? Do we try to solve problems peacefully? Are we as careful about doing violence with our tongues as we are about violence with our fists?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God,
every question can be settled peacefully;
every suffering can bring us closer to you.
Teach us to seek your will in all that we do,
and help our leaders bring peace to the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

February 16, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah *(jer-uh-MY-uh)* is called the prophet of the covenant. Many centuries before the war with Babylon, God had led the Israelites *(IS-ree-uh-lites)* out of slavery. Through the prophet Moses, God invited the people to make an agreement called a covenant. "You will be my very own people," said God, "my holy nation, and I will be your God."

The people were glad to agree: "We will do everything the Lord has commanded," they said. But the people did not always do what God commanded. They sometimes turned to sin and to false gods.

Jeremiah reminded the people of their unfaithfulness. He told them to turn to God again, so that God could make a new covenant with them.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Jeremiah 31:31–33

Listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah *(jer-uh-MY-uh)*:

The LORD said:
"The time will surely come when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and Judah. It will be different from the agreement I made with their ancestors when I led them out of Egypt. Although I was their God, they broke that agreement.

"Here is the new agreement that I, the LORD, will make with the people of Israel:

"'I will write my laws on their hearts and minds. I will be their God, and they will be my people.'"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does it mean to have God's law written on our hearts and minds? How does God keep the promise to make a new agreement with people?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
you protected the Israelites from harm,
and sealed a covenant with them.
In Christ you call us to a new covenant
sealed in his death and resurrection.
Keep us faithful to this new covenant
through your grace and forgiveness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

February 17, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Giordano Bruno *(gee-or-DAH-no BROO-no)*, a scientist and a traveling professor who had many ideas about outer space. At a time when most people still believed that the sun moved around the earth, Bruno said that the universe created by God was more vast than we can imagine. He believed that there are probably creatures like us on other planets.

These ideas were too frightening for the people of his time, and the leaders of the church had him arrested for false teaching. They questioned him over and over for eight years, and finally sentenced him to death. On this day exactly 400 years ago he was burned to death in Rome.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Jeremiah 31:15–17

Listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah *(jer-uh-MY-uh)*:

In Ramah a voice is heard,
crying and weeping loudly.
Rachel mourns for her children
and refuses to be comforted,
because they are dead.
But I, the LORD, say to dry your tears.
Someday your children will come home
from the enemy's land.
Then all you have done for them
will be greatly rewarded.
So don't lose hope.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Who were the "children of Rachel" in the reading? Who could be the "children of Rachel" today? What dangers do children face today?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
you call us your children
and stay close to us always.
Defend us against evil.
Make us brave and faithful,
and strengthen us in times of trouble.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

February 18, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember a Dominican *(duh-MIN-ih-kun)* named Fra Giovanni *(FRAH gee-oh-VAHN-nee)*, which means Brother John. He painted wonderful pictures on the walls of churches, showing the life of Jesus and many of the saints. He painted people dressed in the clothes of his own time standing with Christ and his Blessed Mother so people would understand how close we are to God. His paintings were so beautiful and so prayerful that people called him Fra Angelico *(FRAH an-JELL-ih-ko)*, which means Brother Angel. He is one of Italy's most famous painters.

Perhaps we can find one of his paintings in an art book today, and place it in the prayer center.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

➧ turn to page 186

READING

Lamentations 3:22–26

Listen to the words of the book of Lamentations:

The LORD's kindness never fails!
If he had not been merciful,
we would have been destroyed.
The LORD can always be trusted
to show mercy each morning.
Deep in my heart I say, "The LORD is all I need;
I can depend on him!"
The LORD is kind to everyone who trusts
and obeys him.
It is good to wait patiently for the LORD
to save us.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why do people who are suffering sometimes find it hard to trust God? Do I find it hard to "wait patiently for the Lord"? Do I know any prayers of trust and praise?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Gracious God,
you guide and heal us
through the presence of your Spirit
Listen to our prayers and show us your mercy.
Strengthen in us the gift of prayer
and deepen in us the gift of faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, February 20, 2000

INTRODUCTION

In Jesus' time most people lived in houses with flat roofs. There were steps to the roof so that people could use the roof as a private place to dry laundry or sit in the cool evening breeze. One day, the people in the house with Jesus were surprised to see a sick man lowered through the roof, but they were even more surprised to hear what Jesus said to him.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Mark 2:2–7, 8–12

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus was still teaching when four people came up, carrying a crippled man on a mat. But because of the crowd, they could not get him to Jesus. So they made a hole in the roof above him and let the man down in front of everyone. When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the crippled man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven."

Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses were sitting there. They started wondering, "Why would he say such a thing? He must think he is God! Only God can forgive sins."

Jesus said to them, "Why are you thinking such things? Is it easier for me to tell this crippled man that his sins are forgiven or to tell him to get up and pick up his mat and go on home? I will show you that the Son of Man has the right to forgive sins here on earth." So Jesus said to the man, "Get up! Pick up your mat and go on home."

The man got right up. He picked up his mat and went out while everyone watched in amazement. They praised God and said, "We have never seen anything like this!"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The four friends had to struggle to bring their friend to Jesus. Have I ever tried to bring anyone closer to Jesus?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you forgive with all your heart
  the wrong we do.
Help us to forgive those who wrong us.
Help us to make peace in our families,
  our schools and our neighborhoods.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

February 21, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today is Presidents' Day, a national holiday. This is a good day to read more about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, memorize a list of presidents, give a speech, write a poem or make a big banner.

This is a day to think about what it means to be a leader. Many people are called upon at some time in their lives to become responsible for others. Being a good leader does not mean being a show-off. It does not mean enjoying power over others. It means being the first to see what is right and then doing it. It means being the last to give up when things become difficult.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

▶ turn to page 186

READING

Micah 6:6–7, 8

Listen to the words of the prophet Micah *(MY-kuh):*

What offering should I bring when I bow down to worship the Lord God Most High?

Should I try to please him by sacrificing calves a year old?

Will thousands of sheep or rivers of olive oil make God satisfied with me?

The Lord God has told us what is right and what he demands:

"See that justice is done,
let mercy be your first concern,
and humbly obey your God."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do my friends and I act with justice? Is there a lot of kindness in our school? What does it mean for me to "humbly obey God"?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O God,
strengthen those who believe,
speak to those who listen,
and protect those who proclaim your gospel.
With your wisdom
guide all who work for justice and peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

February 22, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today's feast has an interesting name. It is called the Chair of Peter. At one time there was only one chair at official meetings. It was the bench of the judge, the throne of a queen or the cathedra *(KATH-eh-druh)* of a bishop. Whoever was going to guide the meeting sat in the chair. Perhaps you too have been the chairperson of a meeting.

This feast is about the unity of the church. We are all gathered around the chair of Saint Peter, who became the bishop of Rome and the leader among the bishops of the early church. The person who is the bishop of Rome today is Pope John Paul II. Let us pray for him and for the church today.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Habakkuk 3:17–19

Listen to the words of the prophet Habakkuk *(HAB-uh-cuk):*

Fig trees may no longer bloom,
   or vineyards *(VIN-yerdz)* produce grapes;
olive trees may be fruitless,
   and harvest time a failure;
sheep pens may be empty,
   and cattle stalls vacant —
but I will still celebrate
   because the Lord God saves me.
The Lord gives me strength.
He makes my feet as sure as those of deer,
   and he helps me stand on the mountains.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The prophet tells of crop failure and poverty in Israel. What signs of poverty and war could he list today? Do I ever let problems get me down? How does God help us "stand on the mountains" today?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
   you call us your children
   and stay close to us always.
Defend us against evil.
Make us brave and faithful,
   and strengthen us in times of trouble.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

February 23, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Polycarp, a bishop who was taught by the apostle John. When Bishop Polycarp was arrested for being a Christian, he prayed, "Lord God, I bless you for thinking me worthy to join the martyrs. I will drink the cup of your Anointed One. That is how I will be raised to eternal life through your Holy Spirit." Polycarp was very sure in his faith.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Zephaniah 3:16 -18, 19–20

Listen to the words of the prophet Zephaniah *(zef-uh-NYE-uh):*

Jerusalem, the time is coming, when it will be said to you:
"Don't be discouraged or grow weak from fear!
The Lord your God wins victory after victory
  and is always with you.
He celebrates and sings because of you,
  and he will refresh your life with his love."
The Lord has promised:
  your sorrow has ended,
    and you can celebrate.
I will bring together the lame and the outcasts,
then they will be praised, instead of despised,
  in every country on earth.
I will lead you home, and with your own eyes
  you will see me bless you
    with all you once owned.
Then you will be famous everywhere
    on this earth.
  I, the Lord, have spoken!

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does the prophet describe God's joy in the people's faith? Do the pictures of God in my mind include scenes of joy and celebration? Are my pictures mostly stern or serious? What kind of God have I come to know?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you call us your children
  and stay close to us always.
May our obedience
  be a source of joy to you,
  our love a cause of divine celebration.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

February 24, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Montanus and seven other Christians of North Africa who were put to death in 259. During the months they were in prison these holy men and women were often deprived of food and water for days at a time. Like the Jews who had suffered during the exile in Babylon, these prisoners relied on one another for support. They said, "We have all one and the same spirit, and this unites and cements us together in prayer." We might think today about the ways people of our parish strengthen and support one another.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Zechariah 2:6–11, 13

Listen to the words of the prophet Zechariah *(zek-uh-RYE-uh)*:

The LORD says to his people, "Run! Escape from the land in the north, where I scattered you to the four winds. Leave Babylonia *(bab-uh-LOW-nee-uh)* and hurry back to Zion *(ZYE-un)*."

Then the glorious LORD All-Powerful ordered me to say to the nations that had raided and robbed Zion: "Zion is as precious to the LORD as are his eyes. Whatever you do to Zion, you do to him. And so, he will put you in the power of your slaves, and they will raid and rob you. Then you will know that I am a prophet of the LORD All-Powerful.

"City of Zion, sing and celebrate! The LORD has promised to come and live with you. When he does, many nations will turn to him and become his people.

"Everyone be silent! The LORD is present and moving about in his holy place."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does it make me feel to be called "as precious to the Lord as are his eyes"? How can these words of Zechariah be seen as prophecies of Jesus and of the church?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you call us your children
  and stay close to us always.
May our obedience
  be a source of joy to you,
  our love a cause of divine celebration.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

February 25, 2000

INTRODUCTION

As February and Ordinary Time both come to a close, we end our readings from the prophets of the exile. Now we will skip ahead several centuries, to the time when the Jews were free to return and rebuild their farms and cities. At this time the book of Jonah was written. It is the story of a man sent by God to convert the people of Nineveh *(NIN-uh-vuh)*. But Jonah wanted them to remain in their sin and earn God's punishment because they had once destroyed Israel.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Jonah 1:1,2–6

Listen to the words of the book of Jonah:

One day the LORD told Jonah to go to the great city of Nineveh *(NIN-uh-vuh)* and say to the people, "The LORD has seen your terrible sins. You are doomed!"

Instead, Jonah ran from the LORD. He went to the seaport of Joppa and bought a ticket on a ship that was going to Spain. Then he got on the ship and sailed away to escape.

But the LORD made a strong wind blow, and such a bad storm came up that the ship was about to be broken to pieces. The sailors were frightened, and they all started praying to their gods. They even threw the ship's cargo overboard to make the ship lighter.

All this time, Jonah was down below deck, sound asleep. The ship's captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep at a time like this? Get up and pray to your God! Maybe he will have pity on us and keep us from drowning."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How is Jonah unlike the prophets we learned about during February? Do people ever run away from what God wants them to do?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, through your living Word,
  strengthen those who believe,
  speak to those who listen,
  protect those who proclaim your gospel,
  and be with all those who bring
    your good news
  to the far corners of the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, February 27, 2000

INTRODUCTION

People of many religions use fasting as a form of worship. They might eat less, or go without eating during daytime, or give up sweets. Many of Jesus' neighbors were very careful about religious fasts, and we see they wondered why the followers of Jesus had few rules regarding food. This story helps us to remember that the church adapts its prayer to the passing feasts and seasons. We balance joy and sorrow, thanksgiving and expectation.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Mark 2:18–22

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

The followers of John the Baptist and the Pharisees *(FAIR-ih-seez)* often went without eating. Some people came and asked Jesus, "Why do the followers of John and those of the Pharisees often go without eating, while your disciples never do?"

Jesus answered, "The friends of a bridegroom don't go without eating while he is still with them. But the time will come when he will be taken from them. Then they will go without eating.

"No one patches old clothes by sewing on a piece of new cloth. The new piece would shrink and tear a bigger hole.

"No one pours new wine into old wineskins. The wine would swell and burst the old skins. Then the wine would be lost, and the skins would be ruined. New wine must be put into new wineskins."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I pray each day as though the words are brand new to me? Do we need to do anything to renew our prayer center or our ways of gathering? It has been two months since Christmas. Does the coming of Christ still fill my heart with joy and peace?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you call us each by name
  and speak to us in the quiet of our hearts.
Speak to us of love for all people.
Speak to us of hope for our world.
Speak to us of your gift of salvation.
Speak to us, for we are listening.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

February 28, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today's reading tells us more about Jonah. God calls Jonah to be a prophet, but he will have none of it! He has his own ideas for his life, and besides, he doesn't even like the people of Nineveh *(NIN-uh-vuh)*. He doesn't care if they are saved or not.

The book about Jonah is a real fish story. It is meant to be read with a sense of humor.

On Friday we left Jonah in a storm at sea.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Jonah 1:8, 9–12, 14, 15

Listen to the words of the book of Jonah:

The sailors started asking Jonah, "Are you the one who brought all this trouble on us? What business are you in? Where do you come from?" Jonah answered, "I'm a Hebrew, and I worship the LORD God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

When the sailors heard this, they were frightened, because Jonah had already told them he was running from the LORD. Then they said, "Do you know what you have done?"

The storm kept getting worse, until finally the sailors asked him, "What should we do with you to make the sea calm down?"

Jonah told them, "Throw me into the sea, and it will calm down. I'm the cause of this terrible storm."

So the sailors prayed to the LORD, "Please don't let us drown for taking this man's life. All of this happened because you wanted it to."

Then they threw Jonah overboard, and the sea calmed down.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why did Jonah confess? This story is filled with symbols. What might it mean if the sea were a symbol for baptism?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, through your living Word,
strengthen those who believe,
speak to those who listen,
protect those who proclaim your gospel,
and be with all those who bring
your good news
to the far corners of the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

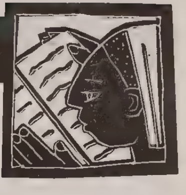
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

February 29, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Today is leap-year day. It is an extra day on the calendar that comes once every four years. An ordinary year has 365 days, but a leap year has 366 days. It is fitting to have this extra day to help celebrate the year 2000.

Because it takes the earth 365 days, five hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds to travel around the sun, every four years we need an extra day on the calendar. This is a good day to learn about the astronomers who figured this out two thousand years ago.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Jonah 1:17–2:2, 7, 9–10

Listen to the words of the book of Jonah:

The Lord sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights. From inside the fish, Jonah prayed to the Lord his God:

"When I was in trouble, Lord, I prayed to you,
  and you listened to me.
From deep in the world of the dead,
  I begged for your help,
    and you answered my prayer.
When my life was slipping away,
    I remembered you—
  and in your holy temple you heard my prayer.
With shouts of praise, I will offer a
  sacrifice to you, my Lord.
I will keep my promise, because you are the one
  with power to save."

The Lord commanded the fish to vomit up Jonah on the shore. And it did.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

No situation is so terrible that it keeps us from asking God's help. What kinds of "fish" can "swallow" people our age? How can we compare Jesus to Jonah?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

God of mercy and compassion, after three days
  you raised Jonah from the belly of the fish.
And after three days
  you raised your Son Jesus from the tomb.
Raise us, too, from our doubts and sorrows.
Bring us from death into life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

March 1, 2000

Reminder: Next Monday and Tuesday are days of festivity before Lent. A ceremony for saying farewell to the alleluia is on page 222. Talk this over with your teacher.

INTRODUCTION

On this day in 1961, President John F. Kennedy began the Peace Corps *(kor)*. It is an organization of volunteers who go to countries all over the world. They help with teaching, farming, digging wells and other things that people need. Thousands of Americans have shown friendship and respect to other countries by serving in the Peace Corps.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Jonah 3:1–3, 4–6, 8–10

Listen to the words of the book of Jonah:

Once again the LORD told Jonah to go to that great city of Nineveh *(NIN-uh-vuh)* and preach his message of doom. Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh. Jonah warned the people, "Forty days from now, the city of Nineveh will be destroyed!"

They believed God's message and set a time when they would go without eating to show their sorrow. Then everyone in the city, no matter who they were, dressed in sackcloth.

The king of Nineveh and his officials sent out an order for everyone in the city to obey. It said, "You must pray to the LORD God with all your heart and stop being sinful and cruel. Maybe God will change his mind and have mercy on us, so we won't be destroyed."

When God saw that the people had stopped doing evil things, he had pity and did not destroy them as he had planned.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In this story, things happen quickly. Why does changing our ways usually take time? If I were Jonah, how would I feel about my success?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, through your living Word,
strengthen those who believe,
speak to those who listen,
protect those who proclaim your gospel,
and be with all those who bring
your good news
to the far corners of the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

THURSDAY PRAYER

March 2, 2000

INTRODUCTION

On this day in 1791, John Wesley died. John and his brother Charles were priests of the Church of England. They taught a method of becoming more deeply Christian through prayer and worship. Their followers are called Methodists *(METH-uh-dists)*.

As a young man, John followed the teaching of his church, but he felt that something was missing. He felt that he participated without feeling the great love and power of God. But one day, he experienced a conversion. He said, "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

➧ turn to
page 186

READING

Jonah 3:10–4:4

Listen to the words of the book of Jonah:

When God saw that the people had stopped doing evil things, he had pity and did not destroy them as he had planned.

Jonah was really upset and angry. So he prayed, "Our Lord, I knew from the very beginning that you wouldn't destroy Nineveh *(NIN-uh-vuh)*. That's why I left my own country and headed for Spain. You are a kind and merciful God, and you are very patient. You always show love, and you don't like to punish anyone, not even foreigners *(FOR-in-erz)*.

"Now let me die! I'd be better off dead."

The Lord replied, "What right do you have to be angry?"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What could be the cause of Jonah's anger? Here is a clue: Nineveh was a powerful city that had once conquered Israel. Jonah gives another clue by calling the people "foreigners."

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you call us each by name
  and speak to us in the quiet of our hearts.
Speak to us of love for all people.
Speak to us of hope for our world.
Speak to us of your gift of salvation.
Speak to us, for we are listening.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

March 3, 2000

➤ Reminder: You may want to make copies of the Psalm, Meal Prayer, and End of the Day Prayer for Early Lent, found on pages 226 to 228.

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Katharine Drexel, who gave her life and fortune to open schools for African American and Native American children. Pope John Paul II said, "In her day, American Indians and blacks in the United States suffered great injustices as a result of racial prejudice. Seeing clearly the evil of this situation, she set out with determination to combat it and overcome it."

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

➤ turn to page 186

READING

Jonah 4:6–11, 11

Listen to the words of the book of Jonah:

The LORD made a vine grow up to shade Jonah's head and protect him from the sun. Jonah was very happy to have the vine, but early the next morning the LORD sent a worm to chew on the vine, and the vine dried up. During the day the LORD sent a scorching wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head, making him feel faint. Jonah was ready to die, and he shouted, "I wish I were dead!"

But the LORD asked, "Jonah, do you have the right to be angry about the vine?" "Yes, I do," he answered, "and I'm angry enough to die."

But the LORD said, "You are concerned about a vine that you did not plant or take care of, a vine that grew up in one night and died the next. In that city of Nineveh *(NIN-uh-vuh)* there are more than a hundred twenty thousand people who cannot tell right from wrong. Don't you think I should be concerned about that big city?"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The book of Jonah ends here. If I wanted to continue this conversation between God and Jonah, what would I write?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you call us each by name
  and speak to us in the quiet of our hearts.
Speak to us of love for all people.
Speak to us of hope for our world.
Speak to us of your gift of salvation.
Speak to us, for we are listening.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➤ sing "alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, March 5, 2000

Reminder: If you meet on March 8, 9 or 10, you may want to use the day's Daily Prayer, found on pages 230, 231, or 232. Talk this over with your teacher.

INTRODUCTION

This is the last week before Lent begins. It is a time of carnival, a time to celebrate by eating rich, tasty foods, such as pancakes. Carnival ends on Mardi Gras *(MAR-dee grah)*. These are the French words for "Fat Tuesday." Then on Ash Wednesday, Lent begins. We can do something enjoyable together before Lent begins. We also can make some plans to keep a good Lent.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Mark 2:23–28

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

One Sabbath Jesus and his disciples were walking through some wheat fields. His disciples were picking grains of wheat as they went along.

Some people asked Jesus, "Why are your disciples picking grain on the Sabbath? They are not supposed to do that!"

Jesus answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his followers were hungry and in need? David went into the house of God and ate the sacred loaves of bread that only priests are allowed to eat. He also gave some to his followers."

Jesus finished by saying, "People were not made for the good of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for the good of people. So the Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Catholics keep two Sabbath rules. How is the rule of Sunday Mass good for us? How is the rule of Sunday rest good for us? How can I help my family keep the Sabbath well?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  you call us each by name
  and speak to us in the quiet of our hearts.
Speak to us of love for all people.
Speak to us of hope for our world.
Speak to us of your gift of salvation.
Speak to us, for we are listening.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

MONDAY PRAYER

March 6, 2000

Reminder: Today or tomorrow you may want to use the ritual for saying farewell to the alleluia (page 222) or for preparing ashes for Ash Wednesday (page 229).

INTRODUCTION

Lent begins on Wednesday. At one time, people did not eat any meat at all during Lent. So they ate all the meat before Lent began. It was a great feast called Carnival, a word that means "goodbye to meat." Today's reading tells us that even in King David's time people celebrated God's goodness by enjoying good things to eat.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

I Chronicles 16:2–3, 7, 31–33

Listen to the words of the first book of Chronicles *(KRON-ih-kulls):*

King David blessed the people in the name of the LORD and gave every person in the crowd a small loaf of bread, some meat, and a handful of raisins.

That same day, David taught Asaph *(ah-SAF)* and his relatives for the first time to sing these praises to the LORD:

Tell the heavens and the earth
to be glad and celebrate!
And announce to the nations,
"The LORD is King!"
Command the ocean to roar
with all of its creatures
and the fields to rejoice with all of their crops.
Then every tree in the forest
will sing joyful songs to the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why is food a sign of happiness? What do I have that I should thank God for today?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
we thank you for the promise
that springtime will follow
these last days of winter.
We thank you for the promise
that Easter will follow
the hard work of Lent.
We thank you for this Carnival time
and the chance to rejoice together.
We thank you through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

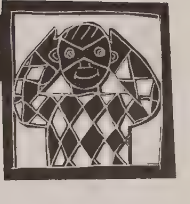
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us.

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER

March 7, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Happy Mardi Gras *(MAR-dee grah)!* That's French for "Fat Tuesday," the day before Ash Wednesday. Today, to prepare for Lent's fasting, some people cook all the meat they have and use the fat for delicious gravy. They use their butter and other oils for pancakes, doughnuts and other sweet things.

As you can see, Mardi Gras is a day to enjoy! In today's reading, the prophet encourages the people with visions of feasts and festivals.

A PSALM FOR FEBRUARY

turn to
page 186

READING

Isaiah 25:6–8, 9

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh):*

On this mountain the LORD All-Powerful
  will prepare for all nations a feast
    of the finest foods.
Choice wines and the best meats will be served.
Here the LORD will strip away
  the burial clothes that cover the nations.
The LORD All-Powerful
    will destroy the power of death
  and wipe away all tears.
At that time, people will say,
  "The LORD has saved us!
  Let's celebrate."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In what ways is a picnic on a mountain like the reign of God? What kinds of foods are served at our favorite celebrations? How will we help our families celebrate Mardi Gras and get ready for the season of Lent?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
  we thank you for the promise
  that springtime will follow
  these last days of winter.
We thank you for the promise
  that Easter will follow
    the hard work of Lent.
We thank you for Mardi Gras
  and the chance to rejoice together.
We thank you through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us.

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"
with all your might!

Farewell to the Alleluia

Before Lent, we say good-bye to the alleluia. This word means "praise God" in the Hebrew language. We will not sing this song of joy during Lent, but we will sing alleluia over and over once Lent is finished and Easter comes.

Make a beautiful banner or scroll with the word "alleluia" on it. Find a box to fit it and a dry place to bury it or lock it away. Gather bells, noisemakers, horns and other instruments.

Learn the song "Jubilate Deo" (page 147 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students), *and sing it in rounds. Or sing the "Celtic alleluia" (page 75 in the hymnal).*

When you are ready to begin, form a procession. Carry the bells and other instruments, the shovel or lock and key, the box and the banner.

LEADER

Let us go forth in peace
to bury our song of joy.
Let us go forth in peace
with strong voices and happy hearts.

Everyone should go in procession to the place of burial, singing "Jubilate Deo" or "Alleluia" and waving the alleluia banner.

At the place, keep singing while you open the cupboard or dig a hole. Raise the alleluia banner so all can see it. End the song. Ring the bells and noisemakers, or play the instruments for a minute. Then the leader gives a signal for silence. (Someone should collect all the noisemakers to keep them quiet.)

In silence, put the banner in the box. Bury it or lock it up. When this is done, the leader says the following prayer:

LEADER

Lord God of joyful noise
and of solemn silence,
give us a good and holy Lent.
In peace,
bring us back to this place in forty days,
when Lent is finished,
to claim our right to Easter joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL

Amen.

➧ in perfect silence
return to the classroom

EARLY LENT

Ash Wednesday, March 8, to Friday, March 31

EARLY LENT 2000

■ ABOUT THE SEASON

In some ways, Lent is the most famous of all the church's seasons. People seem to know the most about Lent. Its seven weeks will take us from the end of winter clear through to the beginning of spring.

LOOKING AHEAD

Lent has many traditions. For example, during Lent we put away the lively song of "alleluia." We will not sing it again until Easter, when we rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus. (On page 222 there is a ritual to help us say farewell to the alleluia.)

During Lent, we also try to put away parties and dances and entertainment. In many Catholic parishes, decorations and flowers—and even baptisms and weddings—are put away, too. Everything is made simple so that we can prepare for Easter.

- LENT IS NOT AN UNHAPPY TIME, BUT IT IS A SERIOUS TIME. With our families, we take this time to think about how much the gospel means to us and how well we are living up to God's law of love. We watch and pray with Christ. We all do our part.

- LENT IS CELEBRATED BY CATHOLICS OF ALL AGES. And it is celebrated at home as well as at church and school. Our parents and grandparents can probably tell us how they kept Lent when they were young.

Let us help our families make good plans for Lent. We can choose actions that everyone can cooperate with. And those actions can help us to become more prayerful, to make our lives more simple and to share what we have with those who are in need. That is the purpose of Lenten sacrifices.

- THE READINGS FOR DAILY PRAYER ARE TAKEN FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK. We will begin tracing the public ministry of Jesus with the reading for March 13, which describes the call of Levi the tax collector to be a follower of Jesus. We will end during Holy Week with Mark's story of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples.

■ PREPARATION FOR EARLY LENT

Decorations and clutter should be cleared away. One of the reasons for putting things away is that it is easier to clean the room. You've heard of spring cleaning? Lent is the church's spring!

- AFTER WE HAVE CLEANED UP, WE CAN PUT SOMETHING IN THE PRAYER CENTER TO REMIND US OF LENT. It can be a cross made of twigs or the classroom crucifix put in a special place of honor. It can be a bowl of ashes to remind us of Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. It can be an empty, dry bowl to remind us that we are waiting for the water of baptism at Easter. It can be a bowl of flower bulbs or seeds or a pot of bare branches that will remind us that Lent is a time of growth and a preparation for the flowering of Easter joy.

- IT'S AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR TRADITION TO COLLECT ALMS DURING LENT. The word "alms" means "compassion." We give part of our allowance or baby-sitting money to help the poor. We bring in canned goods or clothes. We promise our time to do something good, like shoveling a sidewalk for someone who can't do it, raking a lawn or helping out with the spring cleaning at home.

A container for these alms and for our promises to do good might be put in the prayer center.

- ON PAGE 226 THERE IS A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT. The Meal Prayer and the End of the Day Prayer are on pages 227 and 228. These are for the first half of Lent, from March 8, Ash Wednesday, until Friday, March 31. These prayers are also on pages 27 to 29 in *Blessed Be God!*

▪ ON PAGE 229 IS A RITUAL FOR BURNING PALMS TO MAKE ASHES FOR ASH WEDNESDAY. The afternoon before Ash Wednesday is a good time for this ceremony. Put the ashes in a beautiful box or crock. If this outdoor ritual takes place on Ash Wednesday, you might follow it indoors with the blessing and distribution of ashes. You will need holy water, a sacramentary or the *Book of Blessings,* and song books or other participation materials. Ordinarily a deacon or priest blesses the ashes, but anyone can distribute them.

▪ THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH WILL BE OBSERVED ON MARCH 20 THIS YEAR, because March 19 falls on a Sunday. You will want to prepare your celebration during the previous week.

▪ PRAYERS OF SORROW FOR SIN ARE TRADITIONAL DURING LENT. The class or the whole school may hold a penance service. It may include an opportunity for older students to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. This will take thoughtful and prayerful preparation. Another traditional prayer used during Lent is known as the "Stations of the Cross."

▪ SUGGESTED HYMNS: There are many good choices. "O Sun of justice" (page 172 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students),* "Again we keep this solemn fast" (page 99 in the hymnal) and "Lord, who throughout these forty days" (page 156 in the hymnal) are classics. Every Catholic deserves to learn this part of our heritage.

"Amazing grace" (page 108 in the hymnal) is easy to sing as a round. "Somebody's knockin' at your door" (page 186 in the hymnal) is also good for Lent. A soloist can sing some parts of this song, and then everyone can respond.

The End of the Day Prayer for Early Lent is the Canticle of Mary, a song Mary sang when she visited her cousin Elizabeth. This is the church's favorite prayer for the evening. You can sing Mary's song. An English version is found on page 16 in the hymnal. A Latin version, called the "Magnificat," is on page 158 in the hymnal.

▪ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The readings for Weekly Prayer follow the gospels for the Sundays of Lent. They are taken from Year B, the lectionary year that is shaped around the gospel of Mark. The first two Sundays tell about the Lord's temptation and transfiguration.

Many parishes use the Mass readings of Year A, not Year B, on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent. These readings have significance for those preparing for the Easter sacraments of baptism, confirmation and first eucharist. In parishes where this is the case, the Year A gospels can be used for Weekly Prayer. Substitute John 4:6–15 for the reading on page 245, John 9:1–7 for the reading on page 257, and John 11:1–4, 17–27, 38–45 for the reading on page 263.

▪ MANY FAMILIES TRY TO PRAY TOGETHER DURING LENT. Many would be glad to have a copy of the Psalm, the Meal Prayer and the End of the Day Prayer. Families can pray the Psalm in the morning and pray the End of the Day Prayer at bedtime.

Some members of your families might be able to come to the farewell to the alleluia, the preparation of ashes or to other times of prayer during Lent. Talk this over with the teacher. Try to keep your families informed about your religion classes and the things you are learning about the prayer of the church.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

Psalm 18:2 – 4, 7, 47

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Behold! Now is the acceptable time!
ALL **Now is the day of salvation!**
LEADER I love you, God my strength,
ALL **my rock, my shelter, my stronghold.**
SIDE A My God, I lean on you,
my shield, my rock,
my champion, my defense.
SIDE B When I call for help,
I am safe from my enemies.
SIDE A From the depths I cried out,
my plea reached the heavens.
God heard me.
SIDE B The Lord lives!
blessed be my rock,
the God who saves me.
LEADER I love you, God my strength,
ALL **my rock, my shelter, my stronghold.**
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.

turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

EARLY LENT

MEAL PRAYER

MATH
ASTRO-NOMY
KATIE
SPANISH
1

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

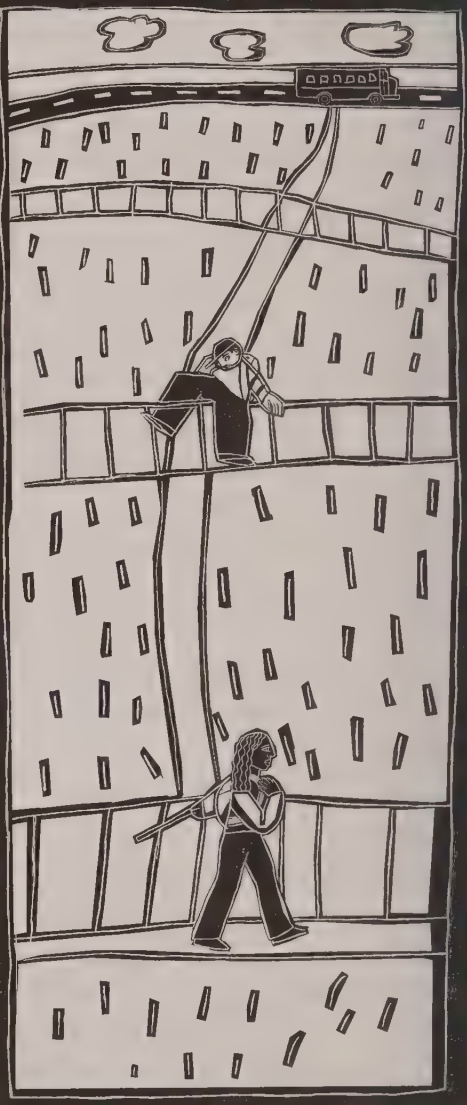
LEADER Behold! Now is the acceptable time!
ALL **Now is the day of salvation!**
LEADER I was hungry:
ALL **And you gave me food.**
LEADER I was thirsty:
ALL **And you gave me drink.**
LEADER I was a stranger:
ALL **And you welcomed me.**
LEADER I was naked:
ALL **And you clothed me.**
LEADER I was ill:
ALL **And you cared for me.**
LEADER I was in jail:
ALL **And you visited me.**
LEADER Lord Jesus Christ,
be with all those who are in need.
Bless us,
and bless the food we eat today.
Help our families, our school and our parish
keep a good and holy Lent.
And bring us quickly to the glory of Easter.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
ALL **Amen.**

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

Matthew 25:35–36

EARLY LENT

END OF THE DAY PRAYER



▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER I acclaim the greatness of the Lord.
ALL **I delight in God my savior.**
SIDE A Truly from this day on
all ages will call me blest.
For God, wonderful in power,
has used that strength for me.
SIDE B Holy the name of the Lord!
whose mercy embraces the faithful,
one generation to the next.
SIDE A The Lord fills the starving
and lets the rich go hungry.
SIDE B God rescues lowly Israel,
recalling the promise of mercy,
the promise made to our ancestors,
to Abraham's heirs for ever.
LEADER I acclaim the greatness of the Lord.
ALL **I delight in God my savior.**

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the almighty and merciful God
bless and protect us:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

The Canticle of Mary, Luke 1:46–50, 53–54

The Preparation of Ashes

Bring palms to an outdoor place away from the wind. Place foil in the bottom of a barbecue grill. Bring a lighter, a poker to stir the fire, a kitchen strainer, a big spoon and a box or crock large enough to hold the ashes. If the blessing and giving of ashes will take place after this preparation, see the suggestions on page 225.

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER

Praised be the God of grace, mercy and peace.
Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!

ALL

Blessed be God for ever!

LEADER

A year ago we held these palms and sang "Hosanna" to Jesus our Messiah. We marched in procession to show that we would follow him. Today we burn these palms and renew our promise to follow Christ our Lord.

READER Joel 2:12, 13, 15, 16, 17

Listen to the words of the prophet Joel:

The Lord said, "It isn't too late.
You can still return to me with all your heart.
Turn back to me with broken hearts.
I am merciful, kind, and caring.

"Sound the trumpet on Zion!
Call the people together.
Bring adults, children, babies,
and even bring newlyweds from their festivities.
"Offer this prayer near the altar:
'Save your people, Lord God!'"

The word of the Lord.

➧ light the fire;
wait in silence until the fire burns out

LEADER adapted from *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*

Merciful God,
  you called us forth from the dust of the earth.
You claimed us for Christ
  in the waters of baptism.
Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days
  bearing the mark of ashes.
Bless our journey through the desert of Lent
  to the font of rebirth.
May our fasting be a hunger for justice;
  our alms, a making of peace;
  our prayer, the chant of humble
    and grateful hearts.
All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus,
  for in his cross you proclaim your love
    now and for ever.

ALL

Amen.

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

To gather the ashes, pour them from the foil into the strainer. Hold the strainer over the box. Stir the ashes through the strainer with a spoon. Cover the box or crock so the ashes will not spill.

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

March 8, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm, Meal Prayer, and End of the Day Prayer for Early Lent are found on pages 27 to 29 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

Today, Ash Wednesday, many Christians receive a cross of ashes on their foreheads. This powerful sign has been used by God's people for hundreds of years. The cross of ashes tells friends and neighbors that we know we are not perfect.

We sometimes break the law of God. We hurt other people. We act selfishly. Today we tell God and each other that we are sorry. With the help of Jesus, we will try during Lent to become better. The cross of ashes means all of these things.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Daniel 9:3–5, 9

Listen to the words of the book of Daniel:

To show my sorrow, I went without eating and dressed in sackcloth and sat in ashes. I confessed my sins and earnestly prayed to the LORD my God:

"Our LORD, you are a great and fearsome God, and you faithfully keep your agreement with those who love and obey you. But we have sinned terribly by rebelling against you and rejecting your laws and teachings. LORD God, you are merciful and forgiving."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What do ashes remind us of? Why are ashes put on our heads in the sign of the cross? When I wear ashes today, people will know that I am a Christian. How does that make me feel?

CLOSING

adapted from *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*

Let us remember these intentions:

Merciful God,
  you called us forth from the dust of the earth;
  you claimed us for Christ
    in the waters of baptism.
Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days
    bearing the mark of ashes,
  and bless our journey
    through the desert of Lent
    to the font of rebirth.
May our fasting be hunger for justice;
  our alms, a making of peace;
  our prayer, the chant of humble
    and grateful hearts.
All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus,
  for in his cross you proclaim your love
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

THURSDAY PRAYER

March 9, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Frances of Rome. She was blessed with a good husband and three children. When two of her children died, Frances was very sad. But she offered her sorrow to God in prayer.

Frances cared for the poor in the worst areas of Rome by bringing them food and firewood. Other women joined her. Some became sisters. They were some of the first sisters who went into the homes of the poor and sick to care for them. Let us share in her spirit as we make plans to care for the needy during Lent.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

2 Corinthians 5:19, 20 – 6:2

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

God was in Christ, offering peace and forgiveness to the people of this world. We speak for Christ and sincerely ask you to make peace with God. Christ never sinned! But God treated him as a sinner, so that Christ could make us acceptable to God.

We work together with God, and we beg you to make good use of God's kindness to you. In the Scriptures God says, "When the time came, I listened to you, and when you needed help, I came to save you."

That time has come. This is the day for you to be saved.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How do I feel when I have done something wrong? Do I ever wish that someone else could take my place when it is time to face the consequences? What does it mean "to make good use of God's kindness"?

CLOSING

adapted from the Byzantine rite

Receive Lent with gladness, O people!
Let us all say:
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.

Let us remember these intentions:

Merciful God,
as your loving children,
we are eager to do what is right.
Send your Holy Spirit to live with us
and to fill us with your light.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

FRIDAY PRAYER

March 10, 2000

INTRODUCTION

This week we can bring to the classroom things that are symbols of Lent. We can place them on a table near the Bible or crucifix.

A bowl of seeds or bulbs can remind us of our need to grow. Bare branches from a tree are also good symbols. We are like bare branches waiting for God's Easter grace to bring us to life. If we put the branches in water, they might grow leaves. This will help us count the days until Easter.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Deuteronomy 31:30–32:4

Listen to the words of the book of Deuteronomy *(doo-ter-AH-nuh-mee):*

Moses called a meeting of all the people of Israel, so he could teach them the words to the song that the Lord had given him. And here are the words:

"Earth and Sky, listen to what I say!
Israel, I will teach you.
My words will be like gentle rain on tender
young plants,
or like dew on the grass.
Join with me in praising the wonderful name
of the Lord our God.
The Lord is a mighty rock,
and he never does wrong.
God can always be trusted to bring justice."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How is the singing of hymns like rain on young plants? How is God like a rock? How will we help with God's plan of justice during Lent?

CLOSING

adapted from the Byzantine rite

Receive Lent with gladness, O people!
Let us all say:
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.

Let us remember these intentions:

Merciful God,
as your loving children,
we are eager to do what is right.
Send your Holy Spirit to live with us
and to fill us with your light.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, March 12, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm for Early Lent is found on page 27 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

As Lent begins, let us make plans to turn toward Jesus with extra prayer and Bible reading. Perhaps we can pay better attention at Mass each Sunday. We also will try to become more generous and thoughtful. This might mean giving part of our spending money to people in need. Christian people try to make Lent a holy season. We can talk this over as a class.

The gospel for the first Sunday of Lent always tells about the time Jesus spent forty days fasting in the wilderness.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 1:12 – 15

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Right away God's Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. He stayed there for forty days while Satan tested him. Jesus was with the wild animals, but angels took care of him.

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)* and told the good news that comes from God. He said, "The time has come! God's kingdom will soon be here. Turn back to God and believe the good news."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why was it a good idea for Jesus to spend time in prayer before beginning his work? Could Jesus have been worried that he would be arrested, as John was? What qualities would it take to do what Jesus was beginning to do?

CLOSING

adapted from the Byzantine rite

Receive Lent with gladness, O people!
Let us all say:
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.

Let us remember these intentions:

Merciful God,
  as your loving children,
  we are eager to do what is right.
Send your Holy Spirit to live with us
  and to fill us with your light.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

MONDAY PRAYER

March 13, 2000

INTRODUCTION

During Lent the church asks adults to pray, fast and give alms. Alms are gifts to the poor. Fasting means eating less than usual. When we turn 14 years old, we are asked not to eat meat on the Fridays of Lent.

Young people can share the spirit of fasting by giving up something they enjoy, like candy or junk food or television. They can do good works, like reading extra books or doing their chores without complaining. These are called sacrifices. They are good deeds, done in God's name, that show our love of God and sorrow for sins.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 2:14–17

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

As Jesus walked along, he saw Levi *(LEE-vye)*, the son of Alphaeus *(al-FAY-us)*. Levi was sitting at the place for paying taxes, and Jesus said to him, "Come with me!" So he got up and went with Jesus.

Later, Jesus and his disciples were having dinner at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and other sinners had become followers of Jesus, and they were also guests at the dinner.

Some people saw that Jesus was eating with sinners and tax collectors. So they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Jesus heard them and answered, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn't come to invite good people to be my followers. I came to invite sinners."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why were people surprised to find Jesus with sinners? What do the words of Jesus in this story mean to me today?

CLOSING

adapted from the Byzantine rite

Receive Lent with gladness, O people!
Let us all say:
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.

Let us remember these intentions:

Merciful God,
  as your loving children,
  we are eager to do what is right.
Send your Holy Spirit to live with us
  and to fill us with your light.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

TUESDAY PRAYER

March 14, 2000

Reminder: Friday is the feast of Saint Patrick. The feast of Saint Joseph will be observed on March 20 this year. You may want to prepare something special for these days.

INTRODUCTION

During Lent we will be reading from the gospel of Mark. When we begin to read at the place where we ended the day before, we call it in the Latin language "lectio continua" *(LEK-see-oh kon-TIN-you-ah)*.

The gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four gospels, and it was the first to be written. It probably was written in Rome, about 40 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 3:1–5

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

When Jesus went into the meeting place, a man with a crippled hand was there. Some people wanted to accuse Jesus of doing something wrong, and they kept watching to see if Jesus would heal him on the Sabbath.

Jesus told the man to stand up where everyone could see him. Then he asked, "On the Sabbath should we do good deeds or evil deeds? Should we save someone's life or destroy it?" But no one said a word.

Jesus was angry as he looked around at the people. Yet he felt sorry for them because they were so stubborn. Then he told the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did and his bad hand was healed.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Jesus helped the man and broke a religious law. This made some people turn against Jesus. Have I ever helped someone even though others made fun of me? Why didn't Jesus wait until the next day to cure the man?

CLOSING

adapted from the Byzantine rite

Receive Lent with gladness, O people!
Let us all say:
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.

Let us remember these intentions:

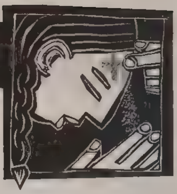
Merciful God,
as your loving children,
we are eager to do what is right.
Send your Holy Spirit to live with us
and to fill us with your light.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

March 15, 2000



INTRODUCTION

In today's reading, we hear that Jesus chose twelve disciples whom he would send out to preach. Each one of them was called an "apostle," which means "a person who is sent out."

These men, also known as "the Twelve," were very important to the early church. Everywhere they preached, people knew that they had learned their message directly from Jesus. We don't know exactly where each one traveled, but we know that most of them died for their beliefs, as Jesus did.

Those people who became Christians because of the apostles' preaching treasured their names and their stories. Let us try to remember all the apostles' names as we listen to the reading today.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

➧ turn to page 226

READING

Mark 3:13–19

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus decided to ask some of his disciples to go up on a mountain with him, and they went. Then he chose twelve of them to be his apostles, so that they could be with him. He wanted to send them out to preach and to force out demons.

Simon was one of the twelve, and Jesus named him Peter. There were also James and John, the two sons of Zebedee *(ZEH-beh-dee)*. Jesus called them "Thunderbolts." Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew *(bar-THAL-uh-mew)*, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus *(al-FAY-us)*, and Thaddaeus *(THAD-ee-us)* were also apostles. The others were Simon, known as the Eager One, and Judas Iscariot *(iss-KA-ree-ut)*, who later betrayed Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why were the apostles so important to the early Christians? Why is it important to know the names and stories of the saints? What do all the saints have in common?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

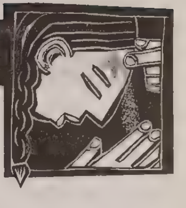
Lord God, we thank you for sending apostles
to the whole world.
We welcome those who bring your good news.
We pray for them and listen to their teaching.
Call on us, one day, to become apostles, too.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

THURSDAY PRAYER

March 16, 2000



INTRODUCTION

In the reading today Jesus tells a story. Jesus often taught with stories that are called parables. A parable reminds us of something we understand because it is part of the life around us, like a wedding party, or like a net full of fish, or like a runaway boy.

Today we hear about a farmer planting seeds. We can understand Jesus' words if we remember a time when we planted seeds and then tended the plants in a garden.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 4:2–9

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus used stories to teach many things, and this is part of what he taught:

"Now listen! A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. While the farmer was scattering the seed, some of it fell along the road and was eaten by birds.

"Other seeds fell on thin, rocky ground and quickly started growing because the soil wasn't very deep. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and dried up, because they did not have enough roots.

"Some other seeds fell where thornbushes grew up and choked out the plants. So they did not produce any grain. But a few seeds did fall on good ground where the plants grew and produced thirty or sixty or even a hundred times as much as was scattered."

Then Jesus said, "If you have ears, pay attention."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What do I think the story means? What could the different kinds of soil mean? How do gardeners feel about the seeds they plant?

CLOSING

adapted from the Byzantine rite

Receive Lent with gladness, O people!
Let us all say:
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.

Let us remember these intentions:

Merciful God,
  as your loving children,
  we are eager to do what is right.
Send your Holy Spirit to live with us
  and to fill us with your light.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

FRIDAY PRAYER

March 17, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Patrick, the patron of Ireland. Patrick was kidnaped as a teenager and brought to Ireland as a slave. Later he escaped, returned home and became a priest. He returned to Ireland as a missionary and bishop. By the time Patrick died in 461, a great many Irish families had turned to Christ.

In yesterday's parable, a farmer sowed seeds in his field. Today we read Jesus' explanation.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 4:14–20

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus said, "What the farmer is spreading is really the message about the kingdom. The seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear the message. But Satan soon comes and snatches it away from them.

"The seeds that fell on rocky ground are the people who gladly hear the message and accept it right away. But they don't have any roots, and they don't last very long. As soon as life gets hard or the message gets them in trouble, they give up.

"The seeds that fell among the thornbushes are also people who hear the message. But they start worrying about the needs of this life. They are fooled by the desire to get rich and to have all kinds of other things. So the message gets choked out, and they never produce anything.

"The seeds that fell on good ground are the people who hear and welcome the message. They produce thirty or sixty or even a hundred times as much as was planted."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What harvest do the followers of Jesus produce? What kind of soil am I? How is Saint Patrick like the farmer in the parable?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

I arise today,
through God's strength to pilot me,
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me.
I thank God through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, March 19, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Have you and your families made plans for Lent? During Lent the church asks adults to pray, fast and give alms. Alms are gifts to the poor. Fasting means eating less than usual.

Children do not fast, but when we turn 14 we are asked not to eat meat on Fridays during Lent. We can share the spirit of fasting by giving up something we enjoy, such as candy or television. And we can do good works, such as reading extra books or helping other people.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

▶ turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 9:2 – 8

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him. They went up on a high mountain, where they could be alone. There in front of the disciples, Jesus was completely changed. And his clothes became much whiter than any bleach on earth could make them. Then Moses and Elijah *(ee-LIE-juh)* were there talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Teacher, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But Peter and the others were terribly frightened, and he did not know what he was talking about.

The shadow of a cloud passed over and covered them. From the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, and I love him. Listen to what he says!" At once the disciples looked around, but they saw only Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

This vision reminds us of the glory of Jesus' resurrection. Why does the church remind us of Easter at the beginning of Lent? How are the white clothes worn by people at their baptism like Jesus' white clothes in this story?

CLOSING

adapted from the Byzantine rite

Receive Lent with gladness, O people!
Let us all say:
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.
Be strong, and turn your life toward God.

Let us remember these intentions:

Merciful God,
as your loving children,
we are eager to do what is right.
Send your Holy Spirit to live with us
and to fill us with your light.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

MONDAY PRAYER

March 20, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Joseph, the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus. Joseph was a descendant of the royal family of King David, but he was not rich. He worked as a carpenter in the town of Nazareth.

Many people celebrate this feast with great joy. Some parishes and even some families prepare a "Saint Joseph's Table," which is often a potluck supper. Everyone brings something to give to the poor.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Matthew 1:18–21, 24

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

A young woman named Mary was engaged to Joseph from King David's family. But before they were married, she learned that she was going to have a baby by God's Holy Spirit. Joseph was a good man and did not want to embarrass Mary in front of everyone. So he decided to quietly call off the wedding.

While Joseph was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, the baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her. Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

After Joseph woke up, he and Mary were soon married, just as the Lord's angel had told him to do.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Saint Joseph is the patron of working parents, adoptive parents, foster parents and stepparents. Do you know any parents who ought to get a big hug and a "thank you" today in honor of Saint Joseph?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
    you put your Son, Jesus, in the care of Joseph.
Put us also in Joseph's care.
Let him watch over the whole church.
May this celebration of his day
    remind us to share what we have
        with the poor.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

TUESDAY PRAYER

March 21, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today is the Jewish feast of Purim *(poo-REEM),* when gifts are given to the poor, and children celebrate with games and treats. It is a time to pray for religious freedom and for hope in the face of persecution. This feast honors Queen Esther, who saved the Jewish people from being killed by a wicked official. This happened to the Jews who were living in Persia, a land that is now called Iran.

Esther wanted her husband, the king, to help her people. But anyone who went to the king without being invited would be put to death. Esther had to go anyway. Today's reading tells us how Esther prepared to speak to the king.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Esther 14:1–4, 12–14

Listen to the words of the book of Esther:

Queen Esther was worried and upset, and she realized that only the Lord could save her people from being killed. So Esther took off her beautiful royal robes and put on clothes that showed this was a time of suffering and death. She put ashes and dirt all over her head rather than using any of her expensive lotions. And instead of doing everything she could do to look beautiful and dignified, Esther just let her long hair hang down in tangles. Then she prayed to the Lord God of Israel:

"You, Lord, are the only king we have. No one but you can help me now, because I am all alone."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I pray for courage when I need to act boldly? Do I take a chance and speak up for others? How did Queen Esther prepare herself to pray for God's help? Why did she do these things?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

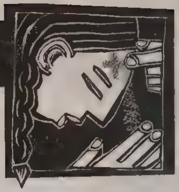
Blessed are you, Lord God,
filled with love and mercy.
When your people are in danger,
you save them.
When your people are suffering,
you strengthen them.
When your people are joyful,
you bless them.
O God, strengthen the Jewish community
as they keep the day of Purim.
Make them secure in their homes
around the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

March 22, 2000



INTRODUCTION

As the year goes by, we celebrate many saints and heroes of our people. Each time we remember them, we learn again about their courage or their wisdom or their love of justice. And what we remember, we share. We pick up a bit of their courage, or their love of the poor, or their prayerfulness to carry with us on our own journey.

Let us thank God for the saints. And during Lent, let us ask them to help us turn our hearts to God in penance and to our neighbors in charity.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

➧ turn to page 226

READING

Mark 4:30–33

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus said, "What is God's kingdom like? What story can I use to explain it? It is like what happens when a mustard seed is planted in the ground. It is the smallest seed in all the world. But once it is planted, it grows larger than any garden plant. It even puts out branches that are big enough for birds to nest in its shade."

Jesus used many other stories when he spoke to the people, and he taught them as much as they could understand.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In what way does God's kingdom begin small, like a seed, and grow? What could Jesus mean by the birds that nest in the shade? What kind of shade does the kingdom of God provide?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Our responses to the three petitions are "Lord, have mercy," then "Christ, have mercy," and then "Lord, have mercy."

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

THURSDAY PRAYER

March 23, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Turibius *(ter-REE-bee-us)*. In Spain he was elected to become a bishop even though he was not yet a priest. Then, in 1581, he was sent to Peru in South America.

There was evil in the church and in the government of Peru at that time. Bishop Turibius tried to reform the church. He spent his life traveling and teaching people the way of Christ.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 5:22–24, 35–36, 38–40, 41–42

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

A man named Jairus *(JYE-rus)* knelt at Jesus' feet and started begging him for help. The man said, "My daughter is about to die! Please come and touch her, so she will get well and live." Jesus went with Jairus. While they were still on their way, some men came from Jairus' home and said, "Your daughter has died! Why bother the teacher any more?" Jesus heard what they said, and he said to Jairus, "Don't worry. Just have faith!"

Jesus went home with Jairus and saw the people crying and making a lot of noise. Then Jesus went inside and said to them, "Why are you crying and carrying on like this? The child isn't dead. She is just asleep." But the people laughed at him.

Jesus took the twelve-year-old girl by the hand and said, "Little girl, get up!" The girl got right up and started walking around.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why is this a good reading as Easter comes closer? What did Jesus ask from Jairus?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Our responses to the three petitions are "Lord, have mercy," then "Christ, have mercy," and then "Lord, have mercy."

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

FRIDAY PRAYER

March 24, 2000

Reminder: Please use October's Meal Prayer, on page 49, and use the End of the Day Prayer on page 23.

INTRODUCTION

Tomorrow we will celebrate the Annunciation of the Lord, when the Son of God became a human person. We are happy that God loved us enough to become one of us, and we are happy that Mary, and then many others, accepted Jesus.

Catholic people honor Mary as the Mother of God, and as the model for those who are faithful to all that God asks of them.

Today's reading reminds us that Jesus calls each person to be his follower. During Lent, the members of the church are trying to help one another become better followers of Jesus.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 3:20, 31–35

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus went back home, and once again such a large crowd gathered that there was no chance even to eat.

Jesus' mother and brothers came and stood outside. Then they sent someone with a message for him to come out to them. The crowd that was sitting around Jesus told him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside and want to see you."

Jesus asked, "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" Then he looked at the people sitting around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who obeys God is my brother or sister or mother."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I think of Jesus as my brother? Do I try to live according to what I hear in the gospel? The Annunciation is the beginning of the story of Jesus. Easter is its completion. How much do we remember about the life and work of Jesus?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God, you give us your finest grace,
your greatest blessing.
You give us yourself.
In Christ, you share our life.
In Christ, you share our suffering and our joy.
All glory to you, now and for ever. **Amen.**

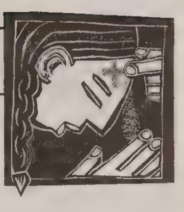
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

Let us all say:
Hail Mary, full of grace . . .

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, March 26, 2000



Reminder: You may wish to make copies of the Psalm for Late Lent, page 254.

INTRODUCTION

In today's reading, we hear that Jesus saw behavior in the temple that did not belong in the house of God. So he brought it to a quick end! Last Sunday we saw Jesus transformed before the eyes of his disciples. With these two gospels, the church reminds us that Jesus is not just a wise teacher. He is the Messiah, God-with-us. He has been sent to teach, to save and to transform his people.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

John 2:13–17

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Not long before the Jewish festival of Passover, Jesus went to Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)*. There he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves in the temple. He also saw moneychangers sitting at their tables. So he took some rope and made a whip. Then he chased everyone out of the temple, together with their sheep and cattle. He turned over the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins.

Jesus said to the people who had been selling doves, "Get those doves out of here! Don't make my Father's house a marketplace."

The disciples then remembered that the Scriptures say, "My love for your house burns in me like a fire."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Is it hard to think of Jesus being angry? How is money handled in our church? Is our behavior in church as respectful of God as it should be?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Our responses to the three petitions are "Lord, have mercy," then "Christ, have mercy," and then "Lord, have mercy."

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

MONDAY PRAYER

March 27, 2000

INTRODUCTION

This week is the midpoint of Lent, but it is not too late to make some plans for prayer and service. Lent is the season to try harder.

Today's reading reminds us that faith in Jesus is the center of Christian life. It does not matter whether we are standing on the shore or seated in a boat far out on the lake, we can be sure that Jesus will hear us when we call.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 4:35–41

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the east side of the lake." So they left the crowd, and his disciples started across the lake with him in the boat. Some other boats followed along. Suddenly a windstorm struck the lake. Waves started splashing into the boat, and it was about to sink.

Jesus was in the back of the boat with his head on a pillow, and he was asleep. His disciples woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're about to drown?"

Jesus got up and ordered the wind and the waves to be quiet. The wind stopped, and everything was calm.

Jesus asked his disciples, "Why were you afraid? Don't you have any faith?"

Now they were more afraid than ever and said to each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Are there dangerous storms in my life and in the lives of people I know? Do I believe Jesus can help me through the storms? How do we pray during times of sadness or trouble?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

TUESDAY PRAYER

March 28, 2000

Reminder: Next Monday we begin to use the Psalm, Meal Prayer, and End of the Day Prayer for Late Lent, pages 254 to 256. You may want to make copies for the class.

INTRODUCTION

Today's reading reminds us of the Easter sacraments. Through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, we are made ready to share in the eucharist. And as we are nourished by the eucharist, we remember all those who need to be fed through our love.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 8:1, 1–2, 4–8

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

One day a large crowd gathered around Jesus. So Jesus called his disciples together and said, "I feel sorry for these people. They have been with me for three days, and they don't have anything to eat."

The disciples said, "This place is like a desert. Where can we find enough food to feed such a crowd?" Jesus asked them how much food they had. They replied, "Seven small loaves of bread."

After Jesus told the crowd to sit down, he took the seven loaves and blessed them. He then broke the loaves and handed them to his disciples, who passed them out to the crowd. They also had a few little fish, and after Jesus had blessed these, he told the disciples to pass them around.

The crowd of about four thousand people ate all they wanted, and the leftovers filled seven large baskets.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does Jesus feed his followers today? How does Jesus give bread to starving people of the world today? How can I help?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

March 29, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today's reading is concerned with one of the most important mysteries of our Christian faith: the mystery of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. When we were very young, our parents taught us about the death of Jesus on the cross, and about his rising to new life on the third day. We have celebrated this mystery at the liturgy. We have prayed about it and talked about it in our religion classes. Sometimes we forget that we cannot understand this mystery. But we can have faith in it.

We do not see the risen Christ, but we see the effects of his resurrection in the lives of those who follow him. How can others see the risen Christ in us?

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 9:30–32

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus left with his disciples and started through Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)*. He did not want anyone to know about it, because he was teaching the disciples that the Son of Man would be handed over to people who would kill him. But three days later he would rise to life.

The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant, and they were afraid to ask.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Our faith in the resurrection of Jesus is a gift of God's grace. Do I respect my faith and the faith of the community? Do I share it with others?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

THURSDAY PRAYER

March 30, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Sister Thea *(THEE-uh)* Bowman, who became a Franciscan *(fran-SIS-kun)* when she was 16. As an African American woman she shared with her sisters the religious traditions of her people. These were traditions formed during times of slavery and oppression, such as gospel hymns and spirituals, religious dancing, testifying in the spirit, and delight in Bible stories of resistance and survival. She was a gifted speaker and traveled all over the country with her message of joyful praise.

Before her death on March 30, 1990, Sister Thea wrote, “When I first found out I had cancer, I didn’t know what to pray for. I didn’t know if I should pray for healing or life or death. Then I found peace in praying for what my folks call ‘God’s perfect will.’ ”

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

▶ turn to page 226

READING

Mark 8:27–29

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus and his disciples went to the villages near the town of Caesarea Philippi *(sez-uh-REE-uh FILL-uh-pye)*. As they were walking along, he asked them, “What do people say about me?”

The disciples answered, “Some say you are John the Baptist or maybe Elijah *(ee-LYE-juh)*. Others say you are one of the prophets.”

Then Jesus asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

“You are the Messiah!” Peter replied.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does Peter believe? Am I able to explain what I believe about Jesus? Do I want Jesus to be a Messiah who gives me things or who gets me out of the trouble that I get myself into? What do I ask of my Savior?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

FRIDAY PRAYER

March 31, 2000

INTRODUCTION

In yesterday's reading we heard Peter announce clearly the faith of the disciples. Peter said to Jesus, "You are the Messiah." Since he was a child, Peter had learned the stories of his people. He had heard the words of the Hebrew prophets proclaimed at the Sabbath gathering. He had learned to hope for the Messiah who would take away the fears and burdens and sorrows of the people. Now, he thought, Jesus would become king and take care of all problems.

In today's reading, Peter, and the whole church with him, learns more about what it means to be God's Messiah.

A PSALM FOR EARLY LENT

turn to
page 226

READING

Mark 8:31, 31–34

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus began telling his disciples what would happen to him. He said, "The Son of Man will be rejected and killed, but three days later he will rise to life." Then Jesus explained clearly what he meant.

Peter took Jesus aside and told him to stop talking like that. But when Jesus turned and saw the disciples, he corrected Peter. He said to him, "Satan, get away from me! You are thinking like everyone else and not like God."

Jesus then told the crowd and the disciples to come closer, and he said, "If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why didn't Peter want Jesus to give this message? Does this message make it easy to gather more followers? Have I ever wished that Jesus would make it easier to be his disciple?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

LATE LENT

Sunday, April 2 to Thursday, April 20

LATE LENT 2000

ABOUT THE SEASON

We are still in the season of Lent. Has it begun to seem long? Lent is 40 days long. We count the 40 days from the First Sunday of Lent through Holy Thursday. The four days from Ash Wednesday to the First Sunday of Lent are a kind of “invitation” to keep the season.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are now halfway through Lent, and that is good news! That means we are halfway to Easter. Have we forgotten some of the things we were going to do during Lent? Now is the time to renew plans and refresh our energy.

▪ THE NUMBER “40” APPEARS IN THE BIBLE MANY TIMES. The most important “40” is the 40 years that the Hebrew people lived in the desert after they left their lives as slaves in Egypt and before they moved into the promised land. That certainly was a long time, but when they thought about it later, they decided that God had kept them in the desert as long as it took to make them ready to hear God’s word and to live as that word commanded.

Do you remember the story about Noah and his ark? In that story, the rain fell for 40 days and nights. Maybe the author meant that God kept Noah and his family away from their “promised land” until they were ready to hear the word and live by it.

Jesus spent 40 days and nights in the desert before he began his preaching. Maybe God was giving him a chance to become strong before his work began. Has God been making us strong during Lent? Our 40 days are not over yet, so it is not too late to make a fresh start.

▪ REMEMBER: LENT IS NOT JUST ABOUT DOING SPECIAL THINGS AND SAYING SPECIAL PRAYERS. The things we do and the prayers we say can help us understand God’s word more clearly and live according to that word more generously. If they do not do that, then they are not useful.

Another good thing to remember is that Christians should be joyful. Joy isn’t always loud and full of smiles. Sometimes joy is quiet and thoughtful. During Lent, we are full of quiet joy. Many people are listening to God. Many people are turning away from sin. Many are preparing to be baptized at Easter. Many are helping each other, working for peace and carrying the good news of Jesus to every corner of the world.

▪ IN LATE LENT THE READINGS FOR DAILY PRAYER are taken from the gospel of Mark, just as they were during the early weeks of Lent. The readings repeat some of the most important teachings of Jesus. Then, with the story of Jesus’ anointing at Bethany, we are drawn into the events surrounding his suffering, death and resurrection.

PREPARATION FOR LATE LENT

There is a new Psalm, a new Meal Prayer and a new End of the Day Prayer for the rest of Lent. They are on pages 254, 255 and 256. These same prayers are found on pages 30, 31 and 32 of the student booklet *Blessed Be God!*

▪ AFTER PALM SUNDAY, ADD PALMS AND OTHER SPRING BRANCHES TO YOUR PRAYER CORNER. They are signs of resurrection and eternal life. At home, many people tuck palms behind a crucifix or behind a holy picture. During the final days of Lent, some people use red or purple cloth to give special honor to the cross. You might want to do that in the classroom.

It’s a good idea to clean the classroom before Easter. Put away Lenten decorations before you leave for Easter break. Then the room will be ready for the colorful decorations of Eastertime.

- LENT ENDS ON HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 20. On page 274 is a blessing that the teacher can use before the Easter holidays. You may want to remind the teacher of this.

- WE LEAVE SCHOOL IN TIME TO KEEP THE THREE HOLIEST DAYS OF THE YEAR WITH OUR FAMILIES. These days are counted from sundown on Holy Thursday to sundown on Easter Sunday. We call these days the Paschal Triduum.

  "Triduum" is a Latin word meaning "three days." And the word "paschal" means "Passover." These three days are the Christian Passover feast.

- SUGGESTED HYMNS: A beautiful song for Late Lent is "What wondrous love is this" (page 208 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*). According to the first verse of this hymn, the "dreadful curse" that Jesus bears for us is the curse of death. Jesus died to put death itself to death. The words of the final verse express our hope in the resurrection: "when from death we're free, we'll sing and joyful be."

  Other songs for Late Lent are "Were you there" (page 204 in the hymnal) and *"Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est"* (page 197 in the hymnal). These Latin words mean "Where charity and love are found, God is there."

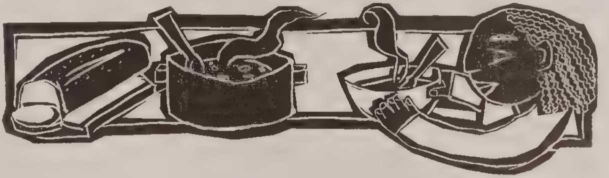
  During these weeks you can also use the other songs suggested for Lent on page 225 of this book. You might take some time to learn the music you will sing in church during the Paschal Triduum. The services in church are very beautiful. Maybe you can have someone talk about them with the class.

THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

If you have been using the Psalm for Early Lent since Ash Wednesday, you are probably just getting comfortable with it now. And your families might be saying the prayers from copies that you brought home. If this is true, it might be a good idea to stick with those prayers and not use the new Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Late Lent.

The Psalm for Early Lent and the Psalm for Late Lent are both beautiful, and they both deepen in us the spirit of Lent. Look them over and decide as a class whether you want to continue using the Psalm for Early Lent (on page 226) or the Psalm for Late Lent (on page 254). But keep in mind that the directions on the Weekly Prayer pages will send you to page 254, the Psalm for Late Lent.

- IF YOU WILL HAVE AN EASTER BREAK from religion meetings, remind the teacher to use the blessing on page 274.



A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

Psalm 130:1 – 7

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Behold! Now is the acceptable time!
ALL **Now is the day of salvation!**
LEADER From the depths I call to you,
Lord, hear my cry.
ALL **Catch the sound of my voice**
raised up, pleading.
SIDE B If you record our sins,
Lord, who could survive?
But because you forgive
we stand in awe.
SIDE A I trust in God's word,
I trust in the Lord.
More than sentries for dawn
I watch for the Lord.
SIDE B More than sentries for dawn
let Israel watch.
The Lord will bring mercy
and grant full pardon.
LEADER From the depths I call to you,
Lord, hear my cry.
ALL **Catch the sound of my voice**
raised up, pleading.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.

➧ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

LATE LENT

MATH
SPANISH 1
KATIE

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Behold! Now is the acceptable time!
ALL **Now is the day of salvation!**
LEADER Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:
ALL **You make us hunger and thirst for holiness.**
LEADER Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:
ALL **You call us to true fasting:**
to set free the oppressed,
to share our bread with the hungry,
and to shelter the homeless.
LEADER May your gifts refresh us, O Lord,
and your grace give us strength.

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

END OF THE DAY PRAYER

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Let us look back over our day
and ask forgiveness
for anything we did
that was harmful or wrong.

▶ stop; allow a minute or so of silence,
and then say:

LEADER To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
ALL **In you, my God, I put my trust.**
I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the almighty and merciful God
bless and protect us:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

The Confiteor

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, April 2, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm for Late Lent is found on page 30 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

In some parts of the country, new green shoots are appearing in the grass. Tiny buds are growing on the branches. In other places there are already splashes of colorful flowers in every yard. These are signs of springtime. These are signs that God gives us many chances for new life. In today's reading we learn that God wants only life for us.

Now that Lent is more than half over, it is time to renew the plans we made when Lent began. We want to turn to God in some special way during these last weeks before Easter.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

John 3:16–17

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus told Nicodemus *(nik-oh-DEE-mus)*, "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die.

"God did not send his Son into the world to condemn its people. God sent him to save them!"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What reason would God have to condemn the world? Is it hard for me to believe that God really loves me? If I were the only person on earth, would God have sent Jesus to rescue me?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during this season of Lent
let us admit that we are sinners,
express our sorrow,
and ask God to forgive us.

Our responses to the three petitions are "Lord, have mercy," then "Christ, have mercy," and then "Lord, have mercy."

Lord, we ask your forgiveness for all our sins.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, we turn our hearts toward you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, we ask your blessing on us during Lent.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

MONDAY PRAYER

April 3, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Late Lent are on pages 30 to 32 of *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

We cannot follow Jesus unless we are willing to change our values. Today Jesus tries to tell us what is really important. When some of the disciples want to know which of them is the greatest, Jesus will not give them an answer. This may have been hard for them to understand. We all want to know who is the best or the fastest or the smartest or the richest. We often put all our energy into winning a trophy or ribbon. But Jesus said that his best followers were the ones who serve other people.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 9:33–35

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus and his disciples went to his home in Capernaum *(kuh-PER-nee-um)*. After they were inside the house, Jesus asked them, "What were you arguing about along the way?"

They had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest, and so they did not answer him.

After Jesus sat down and told the twelve disciples to gather around him, he said, "If you want the place of honor, you must become a slave and serve others!"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How can people my age serve others? Why do people want to be called the "greatest" at something?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
  during Lent God invites us to be renewed
    in our thoughts and actions
  and to open our hearts to others.

Our responses to the three petitions are "Lord, have mercy," then "Christ, have mercy," and then "Lord, have mercy."

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
  Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
  and follow you.
  Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
  in your resurrection.
  Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

TUESDAY PRAYER

April 4, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Lent is more than half over. It is not too late to make some plans for prayer and service. Lent is the season to try harder, to be more careful of others, and to listen to the word that God speaks in our hearts.

Everyone can serve the Lord. In our reading today, Jesus gives a special welcome to children.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 10:13–16

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Some people brought their children to Jesus so that he could bless them by placing his hands on them. But his disciples told the people to stop bothering him.

When Jesus saw this, he became angry and said, "Let the children come to me! Don't try to stop them. People who are like these little children belong to the kingdom of God. I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does."

Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them by placing his hands on them.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does it make me feel when someone hugs me? Does anyone bless me? Do I ever bless others? Do adults outgrow the need for hugs and blessings? Is there an adult who needs some hugs from me?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others.

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

April 5, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today's reading is about holding on and letting go. In the story, Jesus speaks to a man about his money and possessions.

During Lent, when we try to follow Jesus with our whole heart, it is good to ask ourselves what we are greedy about. Are we willing to share what we have with others? Are we willing to give something away if someone else needs it? What we give away might be some material thing, but it also might be our time, our enthusiasm or our willingness to help another person.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 10:17, 19–22

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

As Jesus was walking down a road, a man ran up to him. He knelt down, and asked, "Good teacher, what can I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus replied, "You know the commandments. 'Do not murder. Be faithful in marriage. Do not steal. Do not tell lies about others. Do not cheat. Respect your father and mother.'"

The man answered, "Teacher, I have obeyed all these commandments since I was a young man."

Jesus looked closely at the man. He liked him and said, "There's one thing you still need to do. Go sell everything you own. Give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come with me."

When the man heard Jesus say this, he went away gloomy and sad because he was very rich.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What do I think Jesus means by this teaching? When have I seen possessions cause problems? When does a person's love of possessions conflict with the person's love for Jesus?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others.

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

THURSDAY PRAYER

April 6, 2000

INTRODUCTION

In today's reading, Peter reminds Jesus that the disciples gave up many important things in order to follow him. Peter wants Jesus to reward them for doing that.

Christians sometimes give up many things to follow Jesus. Some people are cut off by their families, and some may lose their jobs and homes. Some Christians have even lost their lives because they followed the Lord.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 10:28–31

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Peter said to Jesus, "Remember, we left everything to be your followers!"

Jesus told him, "You can be sure that anyone who gives up home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or land for me and for the good news will be rewarded.

"In this world they will be given a hundred times as many houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and pieces of land, though they will also be mistreated. And in the world to come, they will have eternal life.

"But many who are now first will be last, and many who are now last will be first."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How do Christians gain "a hundred times as many" brothers and sisters? Who is considered the first or the most important in this world? What does Jesus seem to think about those who are willing to make sacrifices to follow him?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
  during Lent God invites us to be renewed
    in our thoughts and actions
  and to open our hearts to others.

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
  Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
  and follow you.
  Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
  in your resurrection.
  Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

FRIDAY PRAYER

April 7, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember André Trocmé *(AHN-dray TROK-may)*, the Protestant pastor of the village of Le Chambon *(sham-BON)*. Trocmé took Jesus' law of love very seriously, and he often preached about it to his parish. Their beliefs were put to the test when Nazis *(NOT-zees)* tried to arrest all the Jews. Hundreds of people began to hide Jews in their homes and on their farms. They helped about 2500 people to escape. Today let us remember all people who remain brave and faithful during a time of testing.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 10:35–40

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

James and John, the sons of Zebedee *(ZEH-beh-dee)*, came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, will you do us a favor?" Jesus asked them what they wanted, and they answered, "When you come into your glory, please let one of us sit at your right side and the other at your left."

Jesus told them, "You don't really know what you're asking! Are you able to drink from the cup that I must soon drink from or be baptized as I must be baptized?"

"Yes, we are!" James and John answered.

Then Jesus replied, "You certainly will drink from the cup from which I must drink. And you will be baptized just as I must! But it isn't for me to say who will sit at my right side and at my left. That is for God to decide."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I ever try to grab the best place at a table or in line? Do I feel jealous when other people receive praise? Am I willing to spend time with people whom my friends think are unimportant?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others:

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, April 9, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Easter is only two weeks away. We have much to prepare! We can find out the times of the Holy Week liturgies and tell our families. That way we can all prepare together.

In today's reading Jesus uses a symbol to help his followers prepare for his coming death. This symbol offers a message about our lives, too. It tells us that things are not always what they seem. Things that look like death may really be the only way for new life to begin.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

John 12:24–26

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said to his disciples:
"I tell you for certain that a grain of wheat that falls on the ground will never be more than one grain unless it dies. But if it dies, it will produce lots of wheat.

"If you love your life, you will lose it. If you give it up in this world, you will be given eternal life.

"If you serve me, you must go with me. My servants will be with me wherever I am. If you serve me, my Father will honor you."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What are other symbols of life that come from something that looks dead? What are some symbols of springtime and new life that I can bring into my home to help prepare for Easter?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others.

Our responses to the three petitions are "Lord, have mercy," then "Christ, have mercy," and then "Lord, have mercy."

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

MONDAY PRAYER

April 10, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Pierre Teilhard de Chardin *(TAY-ahr duh shar-DAN)* a priest, poet and scientist. His great love for the earth and his ability to see God's energy in all parts of creation have inspired many people. Teilhard once said that he would like to die on the day of the resurrection. He died in New York on April 10, 1955. It was Easter Sunday.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

▶ turn to page 254

READING

Mark 10:46–52

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

A blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus *(bar-ti-MAY-us)* was sitting beside the road. When he heard that Jesus was walking by, he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" Many people told the man to stop, but he shouted even louder, "Son of David, have pity on me!"

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him over!"

They called out to the blind man and said, "Don't be afraid! Come on! He is calling for you." The man threw off his coat as he jumped up and ran to Jesus.

Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man answered, "Master, I want to see!" Jesus told him, "You may go. Your eyes are healed because of your faith."

Right away the man could see, and he went down the road with Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How are we blind? What kind of sight have I been praying for during Lent? When he could see, Bartimaeus "went down the road with Jesus." How am I able to walk with Jesus?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others.

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

TUESDAY PRAYER

April 11, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Stanislaus of Poland. As bishop of the city of Kraków, Stanislaus gave his people advice, shelter, food or whatever they needed. He opened his home to the poor.

The king at that time was very cruel, and Bishop Stanislaus bravely spoke out against him. The king came to the church where the bishop was celebrating Mass one day, took out his sword and killed Stanislaus. About 900 years later, another bishop of Kraków was elected pope. He took the name John Paul II.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 12:41–44

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus was sitting in the temple near the offering box and watching people put in their gifts. He noticed that many rich people were giving a lot of money. Finally, a poor widow came up and put in two coins that were worth only a few pennies.

Jesus told his disciples to gather around him. Then he said, "I tell you that this poor widow has put in more than all the others. Everyone else gave what they didn't need. But she is very poor and gave everything she had. Now she doesn't have a cent to live on."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How do the people of our parish help care for people who are poor? How does my family help? How have I shared what I have during this season of Lent?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others.

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

April 12, 2000

INTRODUCTION

During Lent many people are preparing to receive the Easter sacraments. We also call baptism, confirmation and first eucharist sacraments of initiation *(ih-nish-ee-AY-shun),* because they begin a person's life as a member of the church. It is good to encourage the people who are getting ready with our words or cards, and with our prayers.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 12:14–17

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Some people went to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we know that you are honest. You treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are. And you teach the truth about what God wants people to do. Tell us, should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?"

Jesus knew what they were up to, and he said to them, "Why are you trying to test me? Show me a coin!"

They brought him a silver coin, and he asked, "Whose picture and name are on it?"

"The Emperor's," they answered.

Then Jesus told them, "Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God." The men were amazed at Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does God ask from me? What do my parents ask from me? What do I owe my friends? my school? my teammates? How does this teaching of Jesus help us to sort out our loyalties?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others.

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

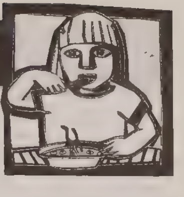
Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

THURSDAY PRAYER

April 13, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Some teachings of Jesus are hard to understand, and they only become clear to us as we grow older and learn to be wise. But other teachings are very clear and simple. They are meant for adults and for children. They are meant for people who are rich and people who are poor. They are meant for all people who hear the good news of Jesus.

As we prepare for Easter, we listen to a very important reading. It contains a teaching that some of us may know by heart.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 12:28–33

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

One of the people asked Jesus, "What is the most important commandment?"

Jesus answered, "The most important one says: 'People of Israel, you have only one Lord and God. You must love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.' The second most important commandment says: 'Love others as much as you love yourself.' No other commandment is more important than these."

The man replied, "Teacher, you are certainly right to say there is only one God. It is also true that we must love God with all our heart, mind, and strength, and that we must love others as much as we love ourselves. These commandments are more important than all the sacrifices and offerings that we could possibly make."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

We have made many sacrifices during Lent. Do we believe that genuine love in our hearts is even more important to God than these sacrifices?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others.

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

FRIDAY PRAYER

April 14, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The Sunday before Easter Sunday is called Passion Sunday because we hear about the suffering and death of Jesus. It is also called Palm Sunday because we carry palm branches, just like the people who walked into Jerusalem with Jesus before he died.

Palm leaves stay green all year. They are symbols of a life that is stronger than death. Palms are a sign of hope in the resurrection of the Lord. Christian martyrs are often pictured with palms as a sign that they were willing to give up their lives as Jesus did. In today's reading Jesus tells his followers to be brave.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

➧ turn to page 254

READING

Mark 13:9–11

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus said, "Be on your guard! You will be taken to courts and beaten with whips in their meeting places. And because of me, you will have to stand before rulers and kings to tell about your faith. But before the end comes, the good news must be preached to all nations.

"When you are arrested, don't worry about what you will say. You will be given the right words when the time comes. But you will not really be the ones speaking. Your words will come from the Holy Spirit."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Can I explain what I believe about Jesus? Can I tell others the main teachings of the church? Am I afraid others will think I am too religious?

CLOSING

My brothers and sisters,
during Lent God invites us to be renewed
in our thoughts and actions
and to open our hearts to others.

Lord, be with those who believe in you.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, be with those who take up their cross
and follow you.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, be with those who hope
in your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, April 16, 2000

Reminder: The blessing on page 274 can be used by the teacher just before dismissal.

INTRODUCTION

On Sunday, April 16, the priest blesses palms and we hear the reading of the passion of Jesus. The reading today reminds us that carrying palm branches on the Sunday before Easter unites us with all those who have welcomed Jesus as the Messiah.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 11:1–4, 7–10

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

When Jesus and his disciples were getting close to Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of them on ahead. He told them, "Go into the next village. As soon as you enter it, you will find a young donkey that has never been ridden. Untie the donkey and bring it here. If anyone asks why you are doing that, say, 'The Lord needs it and will soon bring it back.'"

The disciples left and found the donkey tied near a door that faced the street. They led the donkey to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on its back, and Jesus got on. Many people spread clothes on the road, while others went to cut branches from the fields.

In front of Jesus and behind him, people went along shouting, "Hosanna! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the coming kingdom of our ancestor David. Hosanna to God in heaven above!"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What do we want to ask of our Savior as we move with him toward the three most sacred days of the year?

CLOSING

As we prepare to keep the Three Days of Easter,
let us all say:
Holy God: **Holy God!**
Holy mighty One: **Holy mighty One!**
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us:
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us!

Let us remember these intentions:

O God,
may we receive your forgiveness and mercy
as we celebrate the death, burial
and resurrection of Jesus.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

MONDAY PRAYER

April 17, 2000

Reminder: You may want to make copies of the Psalm, Meal Prayer, and End of the Day Prayer for Early Eastertime, on pages 278 to 280.

INTRODUCTION

Soon Christians around the world will begin their most solemn holy days. There will be times of prayer for the whole parish. The words and gestures, symbols and music have been carefully chosen to help us celebrate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 14:3–7, 9

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus was eating in Bethany at the home of Simon, when a woman came in with a very expensive bottle of sweet-smelling perfume. After breaking it open, she poured the perfume on Jesus' head.

This made some of the guests angry, and they complained, "Why such a waste? We could have sold this perfume for more than 300 silver coins and given the money to the poor!" So they started saying cruel things to the woman.

But Jesus said, "Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing for me. You will always have the poor with you. And whenever you want to, you can give to them. But you won't always have me here with you.

"You may be sure that wherever the good news is told all over the world, people will remember what she has done. And they will tell others."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What could the perfume symbolize? How do I honor the body of Jesus? How does my parish honor the body of Jesus?

CLOSING

As we prepare to keep the Three Days of Easter,
let us all say:
Holy God: **Holy God!**
Holy mighty One: **Holy mighty One!**
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us:
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us!

Let us remember these intentions:

O God,
may we receive your forgiveness and mercy
as we celebrate the death, burial
and resurrection of Jesus.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

TUESDAY PRAYER

April 18, 2000

Reminder: This is the final week of Lent. The blessing on page 274 can be used by the teacher just before dismissal on your last day before Easter break.

INTRODUCTION

It is a custom to clean the house and the classroom before Easter. We can give the classroom a scrubbing. We can do to our rooms what we have been doing to our hearts. We throw out the trash, fix up what is still useful and make everything more beautiful.

Let us try to keep our promises for Lent during this last week of the season.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 14:12–16

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

It was the first day of the Festival of Thin Bread, and the Passover lambs were being killed. Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?"

Jesus said to two of the disciples, "Go into the city, where you will meet a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him, and when he goes into a house, say to the owner, 'Our teacher wants to know if you have a room where he can eat the Passover meal with his disciples.' The owner will take you upstairs and show you a large room furnished and ready for you to use. Prepare the meal there."

The two disciples went into the city and found everything just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover meal.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The disciples had to make preparations. What preparations are being made for celebrating the Paschal Triduum in my home and in my parish? How can I help prepare for a good celebration?

CLOSING

As we prepare to keep the Three Days of Easter,
let us all say:
Holy God: **Holy God!**
Holy mighty One: **Holy mighty One!**
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us:
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us!

Let us remember these intentions:

O God,
may we receive your forgiveness and mercy
as we celebrate the death, burial
and resurrection of Jesus.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

April 19, 2000

INTRODUCTION

At sundown today, the feast of Passover will begin. It is a festival of freedom celebrated by Jews all over the world. Tonight the Seder *(SAY-der)* meal is eaten. Thin bread made without yeast *(yeest)* is served, along with other special foods. Cups of wine are blessed and shared by all who come to the table.

In our reading today, Jesus and his disciples are gathered to celebrate the Passover feast. Christians call this gathering the Last Supper.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 14:22–26

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

During the meal Jesus took some bread in his hands. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this. It is my body."

Jesus picked up a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. He gave it to his disciples, and they all drank some. Then he said, "This is my blood, which is poured out for many people, and with it God makes his agreement. From now on I will not drink any wine, until I drink new wine in God's kingdom."

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Where do we hear these words repeated each Sunday? Why did Jesus give his friends this sacrament of his body and his blood? Do I celebrate the eucharist with respect and gratitude?

CLOSING

As we prepare to keep the Three Days of Easter,
let us all say:
Holy God: **Holy God!**
Holy mighty One: **Holy mighty One!**
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us:
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us!

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, you protected the Israelites
through the blood of Passover lambs.
Continue to protect us all
through the blood of Jesus Christ.
He is our Passover sacrifice, our saving Lamb.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

THURSDAY PRAYER

April 20, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The Three Days of Easter, the most sacred days of the year, begin tonight. There is probably a feeling of excitement in the school. There may be Easter preparations going on at home. Let us try to keep the spirit of Lent until it is over. Let us try to be cooperative, patient and peaceful.

A PSALM FOR LATE LENT

turn to
page 254

READING

Mark 14:32–38

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane *(geth-SEM-uh-nee),* and he told them, “Sit here while I pray.”

Jesus took along Peter, James, and John. He was sad and troubled and told them, “I am so sad that I feel as if I am dying. Stay here and keep awake with me.”

Jesus walked on a little way. Then he knelt down on the ground and prayed, “Father, if it is possible, don’t let this happen to me! Father, you can do anything. Don’t make me suffer by having me drink from this cup. But do what you want, and not what I want.”

When Jesus came back and found the disciples sleeping, he said to Simon Peter, “Are you asleep? Can’t you stay awake for just one hour? Stay awake and pray that you won’t be tested. You want to do what is right, but you are weak.”

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Have I “stayed awake” during Lent? Have I prayed with Jesus? What is the “cup” that Jesus must drink from? Do I end my prayers with a willingness to accept whatever God wants?

CLOSING

As we prepare to keep the Three Days of Easter,
let us all say:
Holy God: **Holy God!**
Holy mighty One: **Holy mighty One!**
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us:
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us!

Let us remember these intentions:

O God,
may we receive your forgiveness and mercy
as we celebrate the death, burial
and resurrection of Jesus.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

A Blessing before Easter Break

Shortly before dismissal, the students gather so that the teacher will be able to bless each one.

TEACHER
May the Lord's face shine on us,
and may the Lord guide our feet
into the way of peace.
Blessed be the name of the Lord,
now and for ever.

ALL
Amen.

TEACHER
Let us put ourselves into the hands of the Lord,
and pray that God will bless us
and our families
during the coming holy days.
May each of us help to make our homes
places of joy, love, peace and safety.
May we be generous and considerate,
helping others keep the celebration
of the dying and rising
of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Please respond "Amen" as I bless each of you.

- the teacher goes to each student in turn, places a hand on the student's head or shoulder, and says:

N., go with God.

ALL
Amen.

- when these individual blessings are completed, prayer continues:

TEACHER
My dear friends and students,
may almighty God give you light and joy.
And, until we gather here again,
may God bless all of us:

ALL

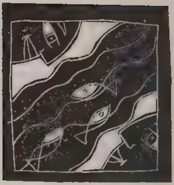
- all make the sign of the cross

- end with a hymn, such as "Lord, who throughout these forty days" (page 156 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) or "Shalom chaverim" (page 177)

EARLY EASTERTIME

Easter Sunday, April 23, to Friday, May 19

EARLY EASTERTIME 2000



ABOUT THE SEASON

Christ is risen! Alleluia! The simplicity and sacrifice of Lent are over. We can relax and enjoy the glory of Jesus and the share he has given us in the resurrection. The natural world reflects this joy.

LOOKING AHEAD

Eastertime is about new life. We celebrate new life with the symbols of eggs, rabbits, chicks, flowers, green grass and butterflies. We rejoice that new members of our parish entered the life of our church when they were baptized and confirmed at the Easter Vigil. All of us nourish the life of God when we share in the Easter sacrament of the eucharist. And so we sing over and over, "alleluia," "praise God."

- CAN WE BRING IN SOME EASTER SYMBOLS TO DECORATE THE ROOM AND PRAYER CENTER? Two important Easter symbols are water and light. We can place a bowl of Easter water and an Easter candle on the table in the prayer center. We can talk about ways to make the classroom "sing" of the resurrection, just as we will sing with our alleluias.

- WE HAVE SPOKEN MANY TIMES THIS YEAR OF JESUS AS THE "LIGHT OF THE WORLD." During Advent we lighted candles on the wreath to show that the Savior brings God's light into the world's darkness. Light is a sign of grace, peace and life.

During Christmastime we used the words of Simeon, who called Jesus the "light of revelation." We used many lights to celebrate the coming of Christ. We put lights on trees and in windows.

Now, during Eastertime, we celebrate Jesus again with symbols of light. The paschal candle, the giant candle that is lighted during this season whenever we celebrate in the church, shows that Jesus lives. His light was not put out with death but shines now because of his resurrection.

The sun rises each morning, bright and strong. It too is a sign of the resurrection of Jesus. The sun has always been recognized as a sign of God's warmth, love and life-giving power. What would we do without it? Let us think about this as we enjoy the longer and warmer days and as we see the plants and flowers that the sun seems to be calling out of the earth.

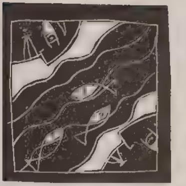
- EASTER IS NOT JUST ONE DAY. It is a whole season, just as Lent is a season. In fact, Easter is even longer than Lent! Lent lasts for 40 days, but Eastertime is 50 days long. The Easter season will last until Pentecost, June 11. So we can plan a variety of Eastertime events in the classroom. All of us can take even longer to celebrate Easter than we took during Lent to prepare for it.

- THE DAILY READINGS DURING EASTERTIME ARE FILLED WITH GOOD NEWS. They tell of excited disciples running to tell one another of the risen Jesus. At first when Jesus joins his followers on the road to Emmaus, they do not recognize him. But then Jesus opens up the words of the scriptures to help them understand. Jesus blesses and breaks bread, and he gives it to his disciples to eat. They recognize him in these actions. In these and other readings, we hear the message that in Christ, life has conquered death, light has triumphed over darkness.

PREPARATION FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

If you do not use the student booklet *Blessed Be God!* you may want to make copies of the Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Early Eastertime. They are found on pages 278, 279 and 280. The class will use them from Easter Monday, April 24, to Friday, May 19.

- THE FIRST THING TO DO AFTER EASTER BREAK IS TO RESTORE THE ALLELUIA TO YOUR PRAYERS! For classes that "buried the alleluia" with a ritual of bells and song, there is another ritual to raise it from



its "tomb." That ritual is described on page 281. And even if you did not put away the "alleluia," you can still welcome it back with joy and lots of music.

▪ PERHAPS SOME OF YOUR CLASSMATES CELEBRATED THE EASTER SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST. If so, it is important to share your joy with them. On page 282 there is a ritual of welcome for those who have been newly baptized or received into the church. It can be used at any convenient time.

▪ BECAUSE EASTER COMES IN LATE APRIL, WE WILL SOON TURN OUR CALENDARS TO MAY. During that month many people remember Mary, the Mother of God, in their prayer. There is a ceremony on page 283 for blessing and crowning an image of Mary. You may wish to use the Meal Prayer for Late Eastertime (page 311) during May. It is the *Regina Caeli,* which means "Queen of Heaven."

▪ HAVE YOU NOTICED THE LARGE CANDLE IN THE CHURCH? It was brought there during the Easter Vigil. It is called the paschal candle, and it represents the light of the risen Christ shining out for all believers to see.

You can have a candle in your prayer area, too. The candle is an important symbol of the Easter season. You might use the same large candle that was used at Christmastime. The Daily, Weekly and End of the Day Prayers tell just when to light this candle and when to put it out.

▪ SUGGESTED HYMNS: "O sons and daughters" (page 170 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) is a beautiful carol from France. Remember that carols are songs for dancing. That is why they are so much fun to sing. They can make you want to move your feet to their rhythm. "That Easter day with joy was bright" (page 192 in the hymnal) is a carol that can be sung as a round. Other songs for the Easter season are suggested on page 309.

You can get into the happy spirit of Eastertime by using musical instruments when you sing your prayer. Rhythm instruments, such as bells, finger cymbals, drums and tambourines, can be used in almost any song.

▪ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The readings for Weekly Prayer are from the gospels of Luke and John. They tell us how the risen Jesus strengthened the faith of his disciples and spoke words of peace and forgiveness. Jesus showed himself to be the Good Shepherd.

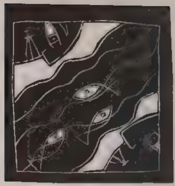
▪ IF SOME MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION WERE BAPTIZED or received into the church at Easter, celebrate the blessing after initiation (on page 282) with them. This might be done by the entire community or by individual classes. You might want to invite their parents to participate.

▪ MANY STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION LIKE TO HONOR MARY DURING MAY. You might place flowers before an icon of Mary, say the rosary (see page 348), or hold a "May Crowning" procession (see page 283).

Make plans for all these things with your teacher. There is also a Blessing Before Summer Vacation, on page 332, that the teacher might want to use if your meetings end during this season.

▪ IF YOUR FAMILIES USED THE PRAYERS you brought home during Lent, they might like to continue to pray together. Copies of the Psalm for Early Eastertime, the Meal Prayer and the End of the Day Prayer, or *Blessed Be God!* can be sent home.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME



Psalm 118:1 – 2, 13 – 14, 22 – 24

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Christ is risen like the sun, alleluia!
ALL **The light of Christ shines**
over the whole world, alleluia!

▶ light a candle,
and then say:

LEADER This is the day the Lord made.
ALL **Let us rejoice and be glad.**
SIDE A Give thanks, the Lord is good,
"God is lasting love!"
Now let Israel say,
"God is lasting love!"
SIDE B I was pushed to falling,
but the Lord gave me help.
My strength, my song is the Lord,
who has become my savior.
SIDE A The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
SIDE B This is the work of the Lord,
how wonderful in our eyes.
LEADER This is the day the Lord made.
ALL **Let us rejoice and be glad.**
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

▶ turn back to Daily Prayer or
Weekly Prayer for today

EARLY EASTERTIME

MATH
SPANISH
KATIE

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Christ is risen, alleluia!
ALL **Christ is truly risen, alleluia!**
LEADER Jesus says to us:
"I am the living bread
  that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats of this bread
  will live forever."
ALL **Loving God, give us the daily bread**
  that is your Son, Jesus,
who is our resurrection and our life,
  now and for ever. Amen.

▶ these words can be sung
to the tune "Bread of life"
(page 134 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*)

I am the Bread of life.
You who come to me shall not hunger
  and who believe in me shall not thirst.
No one can come to me
  unless the Father beckons.
And I will raise you up,
  and I will raise you up,
  and I will raise you up
  on the last day.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

John 6

EARLY EASTERTIME

END OF THE DAY PRAYER

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Christ is risen like the sun, alleluia!
ALL **The light of Christ shines**
over the whole world, alleluia!

▶ light a candle,
and then say:

LEADER Loving God, Creator of the universe,
we thank you for calling us
to be members of your holy people,
and we say:
ALL **Amen.**
LEADER Lord Jesus Christ,
we thank you for forgiving our sins
and for sharing with us your risen life,
and we say:
ALL **Amen.**
LEADER Holy Spirit of God,
fill us with your love
and guide us in the way of peace,
and we say:
ALL **Amen.**

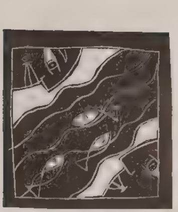
LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

Wherever we go,
may we live in the light of Christ:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

▶ at the end of prayer,
put out the candle

Welcoming the Alleluia



Do this on the day you return to class after Easter break, before prayer and before you use any Easter songs or greetings.

Make sure the banner is still where you put it 40 days earlier. Decorate the place with flowers and pennants and other signs of Easter. Bells, noisemakers and instruments should be there as well.

Everyone first comes together in class.

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

READER Matthew 27:57–60

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

That evening a rich disciple named Joseph went and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate gave orders for it to be given to Joseph, who took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. Then Joseph put the body in his own tomb that had been cut into solid rock and had never been used. He rolled a big stone against the entrance to the tomb and went away.

The gospel of the Lord.

LEADER

Let us go forth in silence and in peace.

Form a procession that goes from the classroom to the place you buried the banner. Bring the shovel or key or whatever you will need to open the box. Move silently to the place of burial.

When you are there, the reader reads the following gospel:

READER Matthew 28:1–7

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

It was almost daybreak on Sunday when Mary Magdalene *(MAG-duh-lin)* and the other Mary went to see the tomb. Suddenly a strong earthquake struck, and the Lord's angel came down from heaven. He rolled away the stone and sat on it. The angel looked as bright as lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards shook from fear and fell down, as though they were dead.

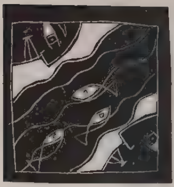
The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, who was nailed to a cross. He is not here! God has raised him to life, just as Jesus said he would. Come, see the place where his body was lying. Now hurry! Tell his disciples that he has been raised to life and is on his way to Galilee. Go there, and you will see him."

The gospel of the Lord.

Dig up or unlock the box. Hold up the alleluia banner. Everyone shouts "alleluia!" and then the whole group should clap, cheer, ring bells and make a joyful noise.

Sing an Easter song with lots of alleluias, such as the song you sang when you buried the alleluia. Move to the place where the banner is to be hung and then to the classroom, singing and ringing bells all the time.

A Blessing after Initiation



This blessing is for students initiated or received into the Catholic community at the Easter Vigil or during the Easter season. The blessing is also appropriate at any time of the year after confirmation or first communion.

A large candle should be in a central place. The newly initiated or received gather near it. One or more of them prepare the announcement, such as, "At the Easter Vigil I was initiated into the church through baptism, confirmation and first eucharist." Or, "Last Sunday, we celebrated the sacrament of confirmation."

Begin and end with an Easter song.

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Christ is risen like the sun, alleluia!

ALL
The light of Christ shines over the whole world,
alleluia!

light
the candle

NEWLY INITIATED/RECEIVED:
Friends and classmates,
I (we) bring you good news
and invite you to share in my (our) joy.
This is my (our) announcement:

____

____

____

all may clap
as a sign of good wishes

READER
Ephesians 3:19–21

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is.

I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. His power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine.

The word of the Lord.

LEADER
Let us hold out a hand in blessing.

all hold out a hand
toward the newly initiated/received in
blessing, while the leader says:

May God give you strength
and fill you with love
so that you may live faithfully
your new life in Christ.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

all make
the sign
of the cross

A May Blessing of an Image of Mary

Use a statue or other image of Mary. A crown of flowers can be prepared to fit on the image. The blessing can begin in one spot (such as a classroom) and move to another (such as the church). Students might carry drawings, flags or pennants, or flowers to put into a vase near the statue. See that any ladders are safe and that lighted candles are out of the way.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Christ is risen, alleluia!

ALL
Christ is truly risen, alleluia!

LEADER
Lord God,
you have given us life
and guided us on our journey.
Be with us as we honor Mary
in song and prayer.

▶ all sing a song about Mary
and walk in procession
to the image

READER
Revelation 12:1, 5

Listen to the words of the book of Revelation:

Something important appeared in the sky. It was a woman whose clothes were the sun. The moon was under her feet, and a crown made of twelve stars was on her head.

The woman gave birth to a son, who would rule all the nations with an iron rod. He was taken to God and placed on his throne.

The word of the Lord.

LEADER
adapted from the *Book of Blessings*

My friends,
today we bless God
and we honor the Mother of God.
I invite you now
to hold out your hand in blessing.

▶ all hold out a hand
toward the image of Mary in blessing,
and the leader says:

Loving God,
in Mary you have given your church
a sign of the glory to come.
May those who honor this image of Mary
look to her as a model of holiness
for all your people.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

▶ crown the image
or honor it with flowers

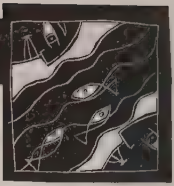
LEADER
We turn to you for protection,
holy Mother of God.
Listen to our prayers
and help us in our needs.
Save us from every danger,
glorious and blessed Virgin.

ALL

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

MONDAY PRAYER

April 24, 2000



Reminders: Raise the alleluia before prayer today (page 281).

INTRODUCTION

Happy Easter Monday! At the Easter Vigil people were baptized and dressed in white clothes. Many people wear something bright or new at Easter. It is a reminder of baptism, of resurrection and even of angels!

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Matthew 28:1–3, 5–6, 7–8

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

The Sabbath was over, and it was almost daybreak on Sunday when Mary Magdalene *(MAG-duh-lin)* and the other Mary went to see the tomb. Suddenly a strong earthquake struck, and the Lord's angel came down from heaven. He rolled away the stone and sat on it. The angel looked as bright as lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, who was nailed to a cross. He isn't here! God has raised him to life, just as Jesus said he would. Now hurry! Tell his disciples that he has been raised to life and is on his way to Galilee. Go there, and you will see him. That is what I came to tell you."

The women were frightened and yet very happy, as they hurried from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why didn't the women expect Jesus to rise from the dead? I did not see the empty tomb. Why do I believe in the resurrection?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Gracious God,
  through the announcement
    of the holy women
  you bring the good news of your love
  to all the peoples of the earth.
Strengthen us to carry that good news
  in our lives, in our hearts and in our words.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

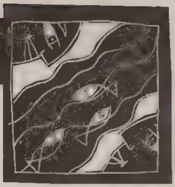
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

TUESDAY PRAYER

April 25, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Today is Tuesday of the Easter Octave. An octave is an eight-day celebration. Because Easter is our most important holy day, this is a week of great rejoicing!

The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation on which our faith is built. Jesus is truly risen and is with us still. This week, our readings will tell us how different people reacted to the wonderful news of the resurrection.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Matthew 28:8–10

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

The women were frightened and yet very happy, as they hurried from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and greeted them. They went near him, held on to his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said, "Don't be afraid! Tell my followers to go to Galilee. They will see me there."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The women held on to Jesus' feet. What signs show my respect and worship of Jesus? Jesus told his followers to return to their homes in Galilee. They would see him there. What can this message mean to us?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Gracious God,
through the announcement
of the holy women
and the preaching of the apostles,
you bring the good news of your love
to all the peoples of the earth.
Strengthen us to carry that good news
in our lives, in our hearts, and in our words.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

April 26, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today is Easter Wednesday. All of our readings this week remind us that Jesus is truly risen from the dead.

In our world there are many signs of resurrection. New grass, green buds, eggs and flowers all remind us of the resurrection of nature after the death of winter. We can bring some of these symbols inside to brighten our classroom. They can help us celebrate the joy of our new life in the risen Christ.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

▶ turn to
page 278

READING

Matthew 28:11–12, 12–15

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

While the women were on their way, some soldiers who had been guarding the tomb went into the city. They told the leaders everything that had happened. So the leaders decided to bribe the soldiers with a lot of money. They said to the soldiers, "Tell everyone that Jesus' disciples came during the night and stole his body while you were asleep. If the governor hears about this, we will talk to him. You won't have anything to worry about."

The soldiers took the money and did what they were told. Some people still tell each other this story.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What was the result of the soldiers' lie? What are some of the reasons that people my age sometimes lie? What are some results of not telling the truth?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Christ has broken the power of sin
  and healed an injured world.
Christ has made us whole again.
Bless our celebrations and our joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out
the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

April 27, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today is Easter Thursday. Let us continue to remember and to rejoice that Jesus our Savior has risen! He shares his new life with us and we sing "alleluia" in gratitude and joy.

The celebration of Easter goes on for 50 joyful and happy days. The fiftieth day is Pentecost. Our Easter celebration prepares us for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who helps us bring the good news of the resurrection to everyone we meet.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 20:19–23

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

On the evening of that same Sunday, the disciples locked themselves in a room. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the middle of the group. He greeted them and showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they became very happy.

After Jesus had greeted them again, he said, "I am sending you, just as the Father has sent me." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they will be forgiven. But if you don't forgive their sins, they will not be forgiven."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What is Jesus sending the disciples to do? Why does Jesus link peace and forgiveness? How am I able to forgive others? What sacrament does this reading suggest?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Christ has broken the power of sin
  and healed an injured world.
Christ has made us whole again.
Bless our celebrations and our joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

FRIDAY PRAYER

April 28, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The celebration of Easter is the work of many people. Parents and relatives may have prepared Easter baskets for us, and special food was cooked. People of the parish have put banners and flowers in the church and have made the paschal candle and the baptismal font more beautiful. The choir *(KWI-er)* has learned new songs. The whole church wants to show the glory of God's life with us.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Mark 16:2–7

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

Very early on Sunday morning, just as the sun was coming up, the women went to the tomb. On their way, they were asking one another, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance for us?" But when they looked, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. And it was a huge stone!

The women went into the tomb, and on the right side they saw a young man in a white robe sitting there. They were alarmed.

The man said, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross. God has raised him to life, and he is not here. You can see the place where they put his body. Now go and tell his disciples, and especially Peter, that he will go ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Angels appear as messengers in many Bible stories. Who are messengers of God today? How do we carry the message of God to others?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Gracious God,
through the announcement
of the holy women,
you bring the good news of your love
to all the peoples of the earth.
Strengthen us to carry that good news
in our lives, in our hearts and in our words.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

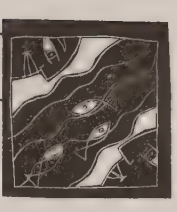
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, April 30, 2000



Reminders: If you buried the alleluia, raise it before prayer today (page 281). The Psalm for Early Eastertime is on page 34 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

The most joyful week of our year began on Easter Sunday and ends on April 30. Christians carry their Easter joy with them through the whole year.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 20:24–28

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Although Thomas the Twin was one of the twelve disciples, he was not with the others when Jesus appeared to them. So they told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But Thomas said, "First, I must see the nail scars in his hands and touch them with my finger. I must put my hand where the spear went into his side. I won't believe unless I do this!"

A week later the disciples were together again. This time Thomas was with them. Jesus came in while the doors were still locked and stood in the middle of the group. He greeted his disciples and said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands! Put your hand into my side. Stop doubting and have faith!"

Thomas said, "You are my Lord and my God!"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How do I, the class and the whole parish show others that we believe Jesus lives?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Christ has broken the power of sin
  and healed an injured world.
Christ has made us whole again.
Bless our celebrations and our joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

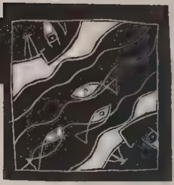
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

MONDAY PRAYER

May 1, 2000



Reminder: If this is the first day after Easter break and you buried the alleluia, raise it before prayer. See page 281.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the first of May, or May Day. The church has dedicated this day to Saint Joseph the Worker. He is the patron of all the people who work to feed and care for others.

During this month we honor Mary, the wife of Joseph and mother of Jesus. Let us remember in our prayers today all parents who work for their families and for the world.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Matthew 2:19–23

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

An angel from the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph while he was still in Egypt. The angel said, “Get up and take the child and his mother back to Israel. The people who wanted to kill him are now dead.”

Joseph got up and left with them for Israel. But when he heard that Herod’s son was now ruler of Judea, he was afraid to go there. Then in a dream he was told to go to Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)*, and they went to live there in the town of Nazareth *(NAZ-uh-reth)*. So the Lord’s promise came true, just as the prophet Isaiah had said, “The Messiah will be called a Nazarene *(naz-uh-REEN)*.”

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Joseph had to protect Jesus. Who protects me? Whom do I protect? How do we help make our school a place that is safe for everyone?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving God,
   you put your Son, Jesus, in the care of Joseph.
Put us also in Joseph’s care.
Let him watch over the whole church.
May this celebration of his day
   remind us to honor all those
      who share in the work of the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

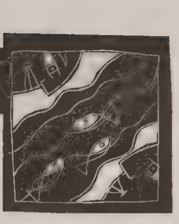
Our Father . . .

sing
“alleluia”

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

TUESDAY PRAYER



May 2, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today is Yom Hashoah *(yahm hah-SHOW-ah)*, or Holocaust *(HAH-luh-cost)* Remembrance Day. Today we remember and mourn the six million Jewish people who were killed during the Second World War. We remember that those who die unjustly will share in God's glory.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 20:11–16

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Mary Magdalene *(MAG-duh-lin)* stood crying outside the tomb. She was still weeping, when she stooped down and saw two angels inside. They were dressed in white and were sitting where Jesus' body had been. One was at the head and the other was at the foot. The angels asked Mary, "Why are you crying?"

She answered, "They have taken away my Lord's body! I don't know where they have put him."

As soon as Mary said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know who he was. Jesus asked her, "Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener and said, "Sir, if you have taken his body away, please tell me, so I can go and get him."

Then Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned and said to him, "Teacher!"

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why doesn't Mary recognize Jesus at first? Why is a gardener a good symbol for Jesus? Could I have seen Jesus without recognizing him?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
By the power of his resurrection,
  root out every form of hatred.
Strengthen the Jewish community.
Make them secure in their homes
  around the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

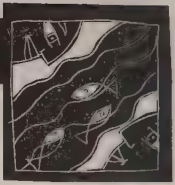
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

May 3, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Today is the feast of the apostles Philip and James. Apostles carried the good news of the resurrection of Jesus along all the roads that led from Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)*. Today's reading tells about Philip's first mission.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Acts 8:26–27, 29–31, 35, 37–38

Listen to the words of the Acts of the Apostles:

The Lord's angel said to Philip, "Go south along the desert road that leads from Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)* to Gaza." So Philip left.

An important Ethiopian *(eeth-ee-OH-pee-un)* official happened to be going along that road in his chariot. The Spirit told Philip to catch up with the chariot. Philip ran up close and heard the man reading aloud from the book of Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)*. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The official answered, "How can I understand unless someone helps me?" So Philip began at this place in the Scriptures and explained the good news about Jesus.

The official said, "Look! Here is some water. Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the chariot to stop. Then they both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Can a person come to know Jesus without knowing the Bible? The Ethiopian learned about Jesus before he was baptized. When did I learn about Jesus?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Gracious God,
through the announcement
of the holy women
and the preaching of the apostles,
you bring the good news of your love
to all the peoples of the earth.
Strengthen us to carry that good news
in our lives, in our hearts and in our words.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

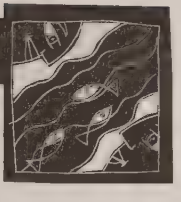
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

May 4, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Easter brings us a season of joy. Sometimes we have sorrows or worries that make it hard to smile and laugh. But Jesus is always with us to bring us a share in his own life. Our sorrows don't go away. But Jesus lives through them with us.

Christians are people of hope. They put their worries in the hands of Jesus. We remember this when we sing, "alleluia!"

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 16:23–24, 26–28

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus told his disciples, "I tell you for certain that the Father will give you whatever you ask for in my name. You have not asked for anything in this way before, but now you must ask in my name. Then it will be given to you, so that you will be completely happy.

"You will ask the Father in my name, and I won't have to ask him for you. God the Father loves you because you love me, and you believe that I have come from him. I came from the Father into the world, but I am leaving the world and returning to the Father."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does it mean to ask the Father "in my name"? In whose name are Christians baptized? What does it mean to carry my family name? How is that like carrying the name of Jesus?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Through Christ, we offer you our lives.
With Christ, we are your children.
In Christ, we bear your name.
Bless our celebrations and our joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

FRIDAY PRAYER

May 5, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today is May 5, or, in Spanish, Cinco de Mayo *(SEEN-ko day MY-oh)*. On this day in 1862, the Mexican people won a battle against an invading army. They will hold parades, dances and fiestas today.

The fifth day of the fifth month is also "Children's Day" in Japan and Korea. Families take children to parks or museums on this day.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 14:1–6

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said to his disciples, "Don't be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house. I wouldn't tell you this unless it were true. I am going there to prepare a place for each of you. After I have done this, I will come back and take you with me. Then we will be together. You know the way to where I am going."

Thomas said, "Lord, we don't even know where you are going! So how can we know the way?"

"I am the way, the truth, and the life!" Jesus answered. "Without me, no one can go to the Father."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What might Jesus mean by calling himself "the way, the truth, and the life"? Do I ever feel as confused about following Jesus as the apostles sometimes felt?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Through Christ, we offer you our lives.
With Christ, we are your children.
In Christ, we bear your name.
Bless our celebrations and our joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

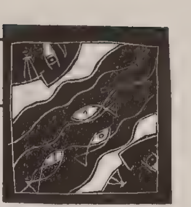
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, May 7, 2000



INTRODUCTION

The stories of the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection tell us something about the mystery of Christ's presence. He is present in the breaking of the bread. He opens the meaning of the scriptures to his followers, he strengthens their faith, and he hands on to them his own mission.

The mission to be messengers, which his first disciples received, is also given to us. When we hear the gospel words of Jesus today, they are being spoken to us.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Luke 24:36–39, 45–48

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Jesus appeared to his disciples and greeted them. They were frightened and terrified because they thought they were seeing a ghost.

But Jesus said, "Why are you so frightened? Why do you doubt? Look at my hands and my feet, and see who I am! Touch me and find out for yourselves. Ghosts don't have flesh and bones as you see I have."

Then Jesus helped them understand the Scriptures. He told them, "The Scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer, then three days later he will rise from death. They also say that all people of every nation must be told in my name to turn to God, in order to be forgiven. So beginning in Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)*, you must tell everything that has happened."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How can we see and touch Jesus today? Why does the world need to be forgiven? Why do I need to be forgiven?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
 we praise you with Easter joy
 because Christ is our redeemer.
Christ has broken the power of sin
 and healed an injured world.
Christ has made us whole again.
Bless our celebrations and our joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

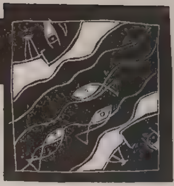
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

MONDAY PRAYER

May 8, 2000



INTRODUCTION

It was important for the early Christians to bear witness to their experience of the risen Lord. They told what they had seen at the tomb and at the places where they met the risen Jesus. Christians today still have the task of telling others of their experience of the risen Lord.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Luke 24:13, 15–17, 19, 20–23, 25, 26–27

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Two of Jesus' disciples were going to the village of Emmaus *(em-MAY-us)*. Jesus came near and started walking along beside them. But they did not know who he was. Jesus asked them, "What were you talking about as you walked along?"

They answered, "Those things that happened to Jesus. He was arrested and sentenced to die on a cross. We had hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free! But it has already been three days since all this happened.

"Some women in our group surprised us. They had gone to the tomb early in the morning, but did not find the body of Jesus. They came back, saying that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive."

Then Jesus asked the two disciples, "Didn't you know that the Messiah would have to suffer before he was given his glory?" Jesus then explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does Jesus walk with his friends today?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
we praise you with Easter joy
because Christ is our redeemer.
Christ has broken the power of sin
and healed an injured world.
Christ has made us whole again.
Bless our celebrations and our joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

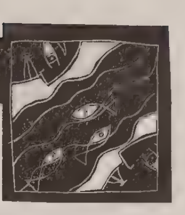
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

TUESDAY PRAYER

May 9, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Yesterday we heard a gospel reading about two disciples who headed for their home in sadness after Jesus died on the cross. They had heard the claim that Jesus had risen, but they did not believe it. It seemed too good to be true.

Then Jesus met them on the road, but they did not recognize him. As they walked together, Jesus explained the meaning of the scriptures.

Today we continue the story.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Luke 24:28 – 33

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

When the two disciples came near the village of Emmaus *(em-MAY-us)* where they were going, Jesus seemed to be going farther. They begged him, "Stay with us! It's already late, and the sun is going down." So Jesus went into the house to stay with them.

After Jesus sat down to eat, he took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then he gave it to them. At once they knew who he was, but he disappeared. They said to each other, "When he talked with us along the road and explained the Scriptures to us, didn't it warm our hearts?" So they got right up and returned to Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem)*.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What helped the disciples recognize Jesus? In what ways does Jesus continue to be present to his followers?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Through the eucharist we live the risen life
  and share the mission of your Son.
Keep us faithful to Jesus,
  who is always with us,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

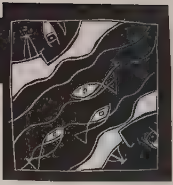
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

May 10, 2000



INTRODUCTION

This week we have been reading the story of the disciples traveling to Emmaus *(em-MAY-us)*. It is an important story because it tells us something of the mystery of Christ's presence. It is repeated wherever Christians gather to celebrate the eucharist, and to pray and reflect upon the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Luke 24:33, 35–39

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

The two disciples found the eleven apostles and the others gathered together. And they learned from the group that the Lord was really alive and had appeared to Peter. Then the disciples from Emmaus *(em-MAY-us)* told what happened on the road and how they knew he was the Lord when he broke the bread.

While Jesus' disciples were talking about what had happened, Jesus appeared and greeted them. They were frightened and terrified because they thought they were seeing a ghost.

But Jesus said, "Why are you so frightened? Why do you doubt? Look at my hands and my feet, and see who I am! Touch me and find out for yourselves. Ghosts don't have flesh and bones as you see I have."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What do we call the part of the Mass when the scriptures are proclaimed and explained? What do we call the part of the Mass that is the "breaking of the bread"? Why do we almost always have these two parts together?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Through the eucharist we live the risen life
  and share the mission of your Son.
Keep us faithful to Jesus,
  who is always with us,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

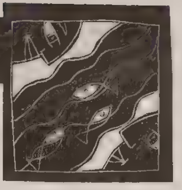
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

May 11, 2000



INTRODUCTION

It is a tradition on May 11, 12 and 13 for farmers and gardeners to watch their fields and be ready to protect their plants from late frost. The "Three Freezing Saints" are linked to these three days of danger. They are Saints Mamertus *(muh-MER-tus)*, Pancras *(PAN-krus)* and Servatus *(ser-VAH-tus)*.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 6:28–33

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

The people asked Jesus, "What exactly does God want us to do?" Jesus answered, "God wants you to have faith in the one he sent."

They replied, "What miracle will you work, so that we can have faith in you? What will you do? For example, when our ancestors were in the desert, they were given manna to eat. It happened just as the Scriptures say, 'God gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

Jesus then told them, "I tell you for certain that Moses wasn't the one who gave you bread from heaven. My Father is the one who gives you the true bread from heaven. And the bread that God gives is the one who came down from heaven to give life to the world."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In what way is Jesus like the gift of manna? Why is Eastertime a good season to think about Jesus as the bread from heaven? How does our celebration of the eucharist help us "give life to the world"?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
we praise you with Easter joy
because Christ is our redeemer.
Through the eucharist we live the risen life
and share the mission of your Son.
Keep us faithful to Jesus,
who is always with us,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

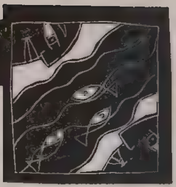
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

FRIDAY PRAYER

May 12, 2000



INTRODUCTION

During the Easter season, the world seems to rejoice that it is filled with life. This is a good time for Mother's Day, because mothers are people who give life. This Sunday is Mother's Day. We can prepare a card for our mother, godmother, stepmother, grandmother, aunt or friend.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

➧ turn to page 278

READING

John 6:35, 37–40

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said, "I am the bread that gives life! No one who comes to me will ever be hungry. No one who has faith in me will ever be thirsty. Everything and everyone that the Father has given me will come to me, and I won't turn any of them away.

"I didn't come from heaven to do what I want! I came to do what the Father wants me to do. He sent me, and he wants to make certain that none of the ones he has given me will be lost. Instead, he wants me to raise them to life on the last day.

"My Father wants everyone who sees the Son to have faith in him and to have eternal life. Then I will raise them to life on the last day."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I expect Jesus to raise me up on the last day? Has Jesus ever raised me up when I was unhappy? How can we share in the mission of Jesus to feed others? How can we "feed" their joy? How can we "feed" their hope?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Through the eucharist we live the risen life
  and share the mission of your Son.
Keep us faithful to Jesus,
  who is always with us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

➧ put out the candle

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, May 14, 2000

INTRODUCTION

In today's reading Jesus calls himself the "Good Shepherd." Shepherds lead their sheep to pure water and tender grass, and they protect the sheep from danger. People who follow Jesus can be sure that he will guide, nourish and protect them. As we honor our mothers on Sunday, May 14, let us remember that they, too, act as good shepherds for us.

But a problem troubles our Good Shepherd. His people do not live together in peace. Sometimes they forget that they are members of one flock.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 10:11–12, 14–16

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives up his life for his sheep. Hired workers are not like the shepherd. They don't own the sheep, and when they see a wolf coming, they run off and leave the sheep. Then the wolf attacks and scatters the flock.

"I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me. Just as the Father knows me, I know the Father, and I give up my life for my sheep. I have other sheep that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them together too, when they hear my voice. Then there will be one flock of sheep and one shepherd."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How can we speed the day when all people are united? What are some of the costs of becoming a united people?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
we praise you with Easter joy
because Christ is our redeemer.
Help us to end the divisions that separate us.
Bring us back to the one flock of your Son,
Jesus Christ.
He is our Good Shepherd, now and for ever.
Amen.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

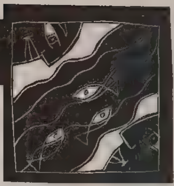
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

MONDAY PRAYER

May 15, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Today we remember a married couple, Saints Isidore, sometimes called Ysidro *(ee-SEE-dro),* and Maria. They lived near the city of Madrid, Spain, in the twelfth century. Although they were poor, Maria and Isidore always shared what they had with those in greater need. Isidore did farm labor, praying as he worked on the land each day. Today let us join Isidore the Farmer and his wife Maria in thanking God for the good earth.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

Luke 15:3–7

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Jesus told this story:
"If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won't you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it? And when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbors and say, 'Let's celebrate! I've found my lost sheep.'"

Jesus continued, "In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

When do I feel lost and want the Lord to find me? Does this teaching mean that God does not love good people and rejoice over them?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Help us to end the divisions that separate us.
Bring us back to the one flock of your Son,
  Jesus Christ.
He is our Good Shepherd, now and for ever.
Amen.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

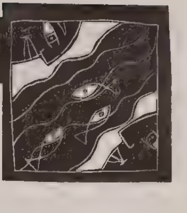
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

TUESDAY PRAYER

May 16, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Brendan, one of the many Irish saints of the sixth century. Brendan was a monk whose holiness and leadership brought many people to follow him. He began a university in Ireland, and he founded many monasteries.

Brendan is known as "the Navigator." It is reported that he and his companions spent many years at sea. A legend says that he sailed to North America about 900 years before Columbus did.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 21:3–6

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing!" The others said, "We will go with you." They went out in their boat. But they didn't catch a thing that night.

Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize who he was. Jesus shouted, "Friends, have you caught anything?" "No!" they answered. So he told them, "Let your net down on the right side of your boat, and you will catch some fish."

They did, and the net was so full of fish that they could not drag it up into the boat.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why do some people say that the fish in the net represent all Christian people? Is anyone in the church still "fishing"?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Gracious God,
through the announcement
of the holy women
and the preaching of the apostles,
you bring the good news of your love
to all the peoples of the earth.
Strengthen us to carry that good news
in our lives, in our hearts, and in our words.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

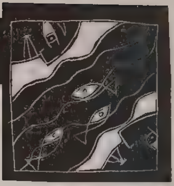
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

May 17, 2000



INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Blessed Josephine Bakhita, an African girl who was sold as a slave. She was taken to Italy, where she worked as a servant for seven years. There she heard the gospel for the first time, and was baptized in 1890. Josephine was sure that God wanted her to become a sister but the family she worked for would not allow it.

Finally Josephine learned that slavery was against the law in Italy. She had been free all along. She did become a sister, and was happy to spend her life doing the most humble tasks for Jesus, whom she called her true "Master."

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

➧ turn to
page 278

READING

John 21:9–14

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw some bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. Jesus told his disciples, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." Simon Peter got back into the boat and dragged the net to shore. In it were one hundred fifty-three large fish, but still the net did not rip.

Jesus said, "Come and eat!" But none of the disciples dared ask who he was. They knew he was the Lord. Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave some of it to his disciples. He did the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from death.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

If the water and the fish in this story suggest baptism, what can the breakfast meal suggest? How does Jesus feed people today?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Through the eucharist we live the risen life
  and share the mission of your Son.
Keep us faithful to Jesus,
  who is always with us,
  now and for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. Amen.

➧ put out
the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

May 18, 2000

Reminder: Next week we will begin to use the Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Late Eastertime. You may want to make copies of pages 310 to 312.

INTRODUCTION

On this day 80 years ago, Karol Wojtyla *(KAR-ul voy-TEE-wuh)* was born in Poland. He studied in drama school and in the seminary. He became a priest and then a bishop. In 1978 Bishop Wojtyla was elected pope. He chose the name John Paul II. Let us remember Pope John Paul in our prayers today.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 21:15–17

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

When Jesus and his disciples had finished eating, he asked, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than the others do?"

Simon Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I do!" "Then feed my lambs," Jesus said.

Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you!"

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus told him.

Jesus asked a third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus had asked him three times if he loved him. So he told Jesus, "Lord, you know everything. You know I love you."

Jesus replied, "Feed my sheep."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What could Jesus be telling Peter? What could he be telling us? In what ways does the pope follow in Peter's footsteps as a shepherd?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
He loves and encourages his people;
  he feeds them and leads them to safety.
Raise up good leaders
  to share in the work of Jesus, our shepherd.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

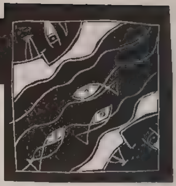
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

FRIDAY PRAYER

May 19, 2000



INTRODUCTION

In the year 1292, the cardinals met to elect a pope. They argued for more than two years, until a holy hermit sent a message that God would punish them if they did not choose a pope soon. So they immediately elected him, and the 84-year-old hermit, who lived alone in a simple hut and owned nothing, became Pope Celestine *(SELL-uh-steen)*. But Celestine soon realized that he did not have the talents to govern the church. He longed for his peaceful mountain. So, after only five months in office, Pope Celestine became the only pope who has ever resigned.

A PSALM FOR EARLY EASTERTIME

turn to
page 278

READING

John 12:44–46, 47–50

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

In a loud voice, Jesus said, "Everyone who has faith in me also has faith in the one who sent me. And everyone who has seen me has seen the one who sent me. I am the light that has come into the world. No one who has faith in me will stay in the dark.

"I came to save the people of this world, not to be their judge. But everyone who rejects me and my teachings will be judged on the last day by what I have said. I don't speak on my own. I say only what the Father who sent me has told me to say. I know that his commands will bring eternal life. That is why I tell you exactly what the Father has told me."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The word that Jesus brings is light for us. Where do we hear this word? Who helps us understand this word? How is my faith a light to others? Whose faith has been a light to me?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
Let him always be our good shepherd:
  welcoming and leading us,
  comforting and feeding us,
  calling each of us by name.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

LATE EASTERTIME

Sunday, May 21 to Sunday, June 11

LATE EASTERTIME 2000

LOOKING AHEAD

ABOUT THE SEASON

Easter came very late this year. Springtime is almost over and the days are sunny and warm. The gardens have provided flowers to decorate the "May altars" we have prepared to honor Mary, the Mother of God. We do not need our sweaters or raincoats as much, and in many places, softball and T-ball practice has already begun.

May has been full of life and beauty and activity. And for some of us or our friends, it has been the time for confirmation and first communion. We have seen an Eastertime filled with natural joy and wonders, as well as God's message of resurrection and new life. There are many reasons for us to sing "alleluia!"

In another week we will celebrate Memorial Day, when our nation remembers those who have died in war. And then the feast of the Visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth will bring May to an end. Next comes Ascension Day.

▪ WE CELEBRATE THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT PENTECOST ON SUNDAY, JUNE 11, WHICH ENDS THE EASTER SEASON. The nine days before Pentecost are a time of preparation. It is a time for each of us to prepare our hearts and perhaps our world, too, for the coming of the Spirit.

The risen Jesus helped his disciples realize that he would always be with them. He spoke to them of the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would be God's everlasting presence. The disciples were to wait for the coming of the Spirit and then do as the Spirit guided them. The Holy Spirit brings God's gifts of love, unity and courage.

The Holy Spirit has been with each of us and with our class during this school year. Through the power of that Spirit we have been able to care about each other and grow in respect for each other. In the power of that Spirit we have been able to grow in our love of God and in our ability to see Christ in others. In the power of that Spirit we have prayed and worked for people in need.

The book of Isaiah tells about the Spirit that will rest upon God's servants. Isaiah says it will be a spirit of understanding, wisdom and insight, of counsel and strength, and of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

When people prepare for the sacrament of confirmation, they learn about the gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are promised to all who join Jesus in doing the work of God.

▪ OUR READINGS FOR DAILY PRAYER ARE TAKEN FROM SEVERAL GOSPELS AND OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS. We follow the disciples as they learn the meaning of Christ's resurrection. We learn, with Nicodemus, the importance of baptism, an Easter sacrament. In the days before Pentecost we hear again the promises made to the church that God's Spirit would come and sustain it.

PREPARATION FOR LATE EASTERTIME

We have a new Psalm, a new Meal Prayer and a new End of the Day Prayer. They are on pages 310, 311 and 312. If you do not use the booklet *Blessed Be God!* you may want to make copies for the class.

▪ IS THE PRAYER CENTER STILL FRESH AND BEAUTIFUL FOR EASTERTIME? Does it have signs of new life and resurrection? Do we have a bowl of fresh water there to help us remember the Easter sacrament of baptism?

A drop of perfume or scented oil can be added to the Easter water to remind us of chrism. Chrism is a fragrant oil that is put on our heads after we are baptized and when we are confirmed. Chrism makes us a new Christ, because the word "Christ" means "anointed one."

If you have placed an image of Mary in the prayer center, you might replace it with a different one for the final days of May. Find a picture that you have not seen before. There are many beautiful pictures and carvings of Mary from every part of the church's history, and from every country where the gospel has been preached.

▪ THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD: In the states of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington, the Ascension is celebrated on Sunday, June 4. In other states, the Ascension is kept as usual on Thursday, June 1. The Daily Prayer on page 322 can be used on June 1 whether or not we celebrate the Ascension that day. There is a special End of the Day Prayer for the Ascension. You will find it on page 323.

Where it is celebrated on a Thursday, Ascension is a holy day of obligation. This means that Catholics gather to celebrate the eucharist on that day. If we will celebrate Mass during school on that day, we may want to skip or shorten Daily Prayer.

▪ THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR is not far away! If your classes end before June 11, don't forget the Blessing before Summer Vacation, on page 332.

▪ SUGGESTED HYMNS: "Shout for joy" (page 178 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) is a carol. "The Lord, the Lord, the Lord is my shepherd" (page 194 in the hymnal) is an African American spiritual that can be sung with tambourines, sleigh bells and clapping. See the other suggestions for Eastertime, found on page 277.

A fine song for the end of Eastertime is "Lord, you give the great commission" (page 156 in the hymnal). "Sing with all the saints in glory" (page 184 in the hymnal) uses the same melody.

A song for the Ascension is "Alleluia, sing to Jesus" (page 106 in the hymnal). Sing this hymn like a dance, with one strong beat in each measure.

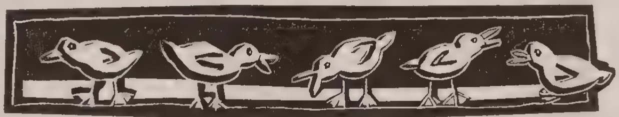
To prepare for Pentecost, sing "O breathe on me, O breath of God" (page 162 in the hymnal). This Irish melody can be sung as a round. The Holy Spirit is sometimes called "God's breath." That is what the Latin word *spiritus* means.

■ THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The readings for Weekly Prayer follow the Sunday readings. We learn that Jesus is a vine and we are its branches. We hear about the promised Spirit, about Jesus' gift and command of unity, and finally, about the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

You may want to use the prayer for Ascension Day (page 322) no matter which day you meet during the week of May 30 to June 3.

▪ WHETHER THE FINAL CLASS ENDS WITH A PARTY OR NOT, DON'T FORGET TO PRAY THE BLESSING BEFORE SUMMER VACATION. It is found on page 332. You may be able to take *Blessed Be God!* home for the summer if you have been using it in class. You and your family can pray together during the summer and ask God's blessings on this wonderful season.



A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

Psalm 23:1 – 6

➧ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Christ is risen like the sun, alleluia!
ALL **The light of Christ shines**
over the whole world, alleluia!

➧ light a candle,
and then say:

LEADER The Lord is my shepherd, all that I need,
giving me rest in green and pleasant fields,
ALL **reviving my life by finding fresh water,**
guiding my ways with a shepherd's care.
SIDE A Though I should walk in death's dark valley,
I fear no evil with you by my side.
Your shepherd's staff comforts me.
SIDE B You spread my table in sight of my foes,
anoint my head, my cup runs over.
You tend me with love always loyal.
I dwell with you, Lord, as long as I live.
LEADER The Lord is my shepherd, all that I need,
giving me rest in green and pleasant fields,
ALL **reviving my life by finding fresh water,**
guiding my ways with a shepherd's care.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

➧ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

LATE EASTERTIME

MEAL PRAYER

MATH
SPANISH
1
KATIE

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

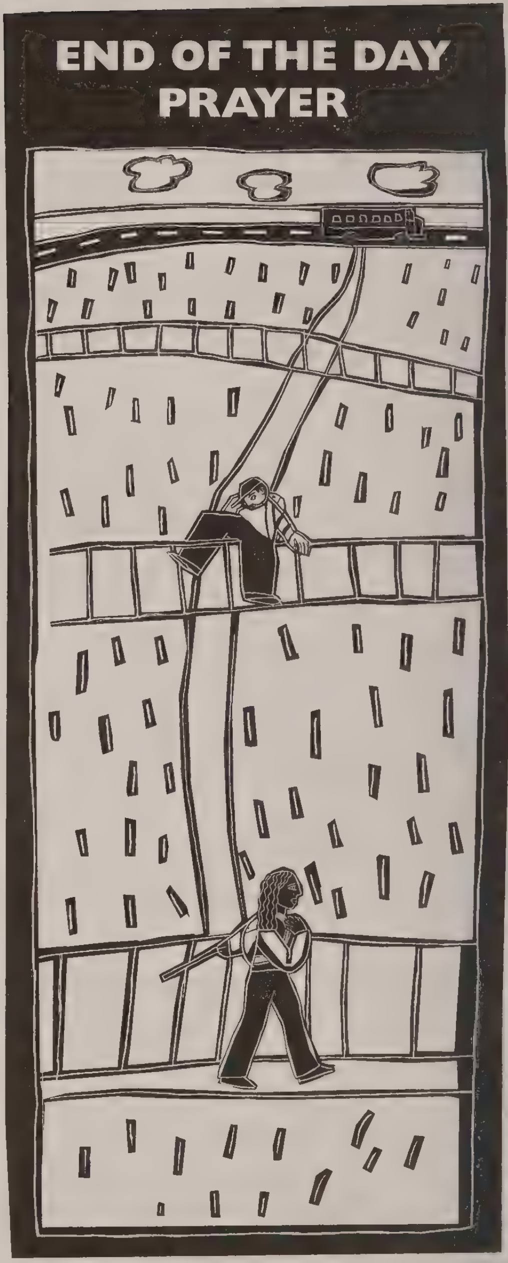
ALL ▶ all make the sign of the cross

LEADER Christ is risen, alleluia!
ALL **Christ is truly risen, alleluia!**
LEADER O Queen of heaven, rejoice:
ALL **Alleluia.**
LEADER For he to whom you once gave birth:
ALL **Alleluia.**
LEADER Has risen as he promised:
ALL **Alleluia.**
LEADER Pray for us to God:
ALL **Alleluia.**
LEADER Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
ALL **For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.**
LEADER God, through the resurrection of your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
you gave joy to the world.
Now through the prayer of his mother,
the Virgin Mary,
may we gain the joys of everlasting life.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
ALL **Amen.**

▶ all make the sign of the cross

The *Regina Caeli*, from *A Book of Prayers*

LATE EASTERTIME


END OF THE DAY PRAYER

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Christ is risen like the sun, alleluia!
ALL **The light of Christ shines**
over the whole world, alleluia!

▶ light a candle,
and then say:

LEADER Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful.
ALL **And kindle in them the fire of your love.**
LEADER Send forth your Spirit
and they shall be created.
ALL **And you will renew the face of the earth.**
LEADER Gracious God,
send your Spirit into the church
to strengthen the hearts of all who believe.
And send your Spirit into the world
to fulfill the work of the gospel.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
ALL **Amen.**

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May we live in the light of Christ:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

▶ at the end of prayer,
put out the candle

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, May 21, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm for Late Eastertime
is on page 37 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

Every springtime, the church reminds us that Jesus has come to bring us the fullness of life.

But a full life is a lot more than just breathing. A full life is paying attention to grass and flowers and sunshine. A full life is opening our hearts to everything around us. This life is the strong connection we have with our family and with everyone who shares our earth. This life is God's grasp, holding us together.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to
page 310

READING

John 15:1, 4–5, 7–8

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

"Stay joined to me, and I will stay joined to you. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to the vine, you cannot produce fruit unless you stay joined to me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me.

"Stay joined to me and let my teachings become part of you. Then you can pray for whatever you want, and your prayer will be answered. When you become fruitful disciples of mine, my Father will be honored."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What fruit is Jesus talking about? How am I as much a part of Jesus as a branch is part of a vine?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Loving and glorious God,
  we praise you with Easter joy
  because Christ is our redeemer.
May his life keep us alive,
  just as the vine gives life
    to the tip of every branch.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

MONDAY PRAYER

May 22, 2000

Reminder: The Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Late Eastertime are in *Blessed Be God!* on pages 37 to 39.

INTRODUCTION

On this day in 1925, a man named Matt Talbot died in Dublin, Ireland.

When Matt was a young man, he became addicted to alcohol. By the time he was 25, he was jobless, penniless and homeless. He finally prayed for God's help and became sober. He never drank again and led a life of prayer and penance. Matt Talbot turned a life of drunkenness into a life of holiness, but few people knew about it because he was not a man who drew attention to himself.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to
page 310

READING

John 3:3–6

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said to Nicodemus *(nik-oh-DEE-mus)*, "I tell you for certain that you must be born from above before you can see God's kingdom!"

Nicodemus asked, "How can a grown man ever be born a second time?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God's Spirit can change you into a child of God."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What kind of new birth could Jesus be talking about? What kind of birth did Nicodemus think he meant? What is the role of the Spirit in my life?

CLOSING

Loving and glorious God,
we praise you with Easter joy
because Christ is our redeemer.
Send life to us now,
as you did on the day of our baptism,
and renew in us the gift of your Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

TUESDAY PRAYER

May 23, 2000

INTRODUCTION

This week's readings tell about a talk between Jesus and Nicodemus *(nik-oh-DEE-mus)*. Nicodemus knew that Jesus had many enemies, so he came to visit Jesus at night. He did not want anyone to see them talking. Jesus was not angry with Nicodemus for being afraid. He knew that one day, Nicodemus would show his faith even in daylight.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

▶ turn to
page 310

READING

John 3:8–10, 12, 14–15

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said to Nicodemus *(nik-oh-DEE-mus)*, "Only God's Spirit gives new life. The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going."

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

Jesus replied, "If you don't believe when I talk to you about things on earth, how can you possibly believe if I talk to you about things in heaven? The Son of Man must be lifted up, just as that metal snake was lifted up by Moses in the desert. Then everyone who has faith in the Son of Man will have eternal life."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How is the Holy Spirit like the wind? The story about the metal snake is found in the book of Numbers (21:4–9). How was Jesus "lifted up"?

CLOSING

Let us all say:
Christ, our light and our salvation!
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the sun that shines on everyone,
  the day that knows no ending:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You give us this new day.
You give new life to the whole earth:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the springtime of the universe
  and the savior of the world:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out
the candle

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

May 24, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The celebration of Easter is so important to the Christian people that it lasts 50 days. Two and a half weeks remain of this time. Today we can take time to refresh the signs of Easter and of new life in our classroom. This will help us prepare for the coming feast of Pentecost.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

▶ turn to
page 310

READING

John 3:16–17, 19–21

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said to Nicodemus *(nik-oh-DEE-mus)*, "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn its people. He sent him to save them!

"The light has come into the world, and people who do evil things are judged guilty because they love the dark more than the light. People who do evil hate the light and won't come to the light, because it clearly shows what they have done. But everyone who lives by the truth will come to the light, because they want others to know that God is really the one doing what they do."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I know anyone who has tried to keep wrong deeds "covered up"? Have I ever tried to keep others "in the dark" about what is going on?

CLOSING

Let us all say:
Christ, our light and our salvation!
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the sun that shines on everyone,
the day that knows no ending:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You give us this new day.
You give new life to the whole earth:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the springtime of the universe
and the savior of the world:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out
the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

May 25, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Pope Gregory VII. As a priest, he was an advisor to two popes. This experience helped him when he himself was elected pope in 1073. Pope Gregory worked for the liberty of the church. Like Pope John Paul, Gregory traveled to many countries, teaching and encouraging the people.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to
page 310

READING

Romans 6:3–5

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Don't you know that all who share in Christ Jesus by being baptized also share in his death? When we were baptized, we died and were buried with Christ. We were baptized, so that we would live a new life, as Christ was raised to life by the glory of God the Father.

If we shared in Jesus' death by being baptized, we will be raised to life with him.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

In what way is the baptismal font like a grave? In what way is it like a womb? Why is water a good symbol both of death and of life?

CLOSING

Let us all say:
Christ, our light and our salvation!
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the sun that shines on everyone,
the day that knows no ending:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You give us this new day.
You give new life to the whole earth:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the springtime of the universe
and the savior of the world:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

FRIDAY PRAYER

May 26, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Philip Neri *(NEER-ee),* an Italian priest who lived in very sinful times. He did not scold people, but with love and kindness led many people to reform their lives. He began study groups where priests and lay people would give talks about the Bible. Some people were so surprised at the idea of letting lay people preach that they had Father Neri investigated.

To honor Philip Neri, who had a wonderful sense of humor, let us tell some good jokes today.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to
page 310

READING

John 7:33–35, 37–39

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said, "I will be with you a little while longer, and then I will return to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you won't find me. You cannot go where I am going."

The people asked each other, "Where can he go to keep us from finding him? Is he going to some foreign country where our people live?"

Jesus stood up and shouted, "If you are thirsty, come to me and drink! Have faith in me, and you will have life-giving water flowing from deep inside you, just as the Scriptures say." Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit, who would be given to everyone that had faith in him.

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What is "life-giving water"? Why would this image be especially important to people in a desert country?

CLOSING

Let us all say:
Christ, our light and our salvation!
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the sun that shines on everyone,
  the day that knows no ending:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You give us this new day.
You give new life to the whole earth:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the springtime of the universe
  and the savior of the world:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

WEEKLY PRAYER

With the Second Reading for Sunday, May 28, 2000

INTRODUCTION

For many centuries, Christians would not bring legal cases against one another in the courts. Instead, they tried to work out their problems with the help of the wisest members of their community.

We can try to create that kind of world again, but first we must take Jesus seriously and try honestly to follow his way.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

▶ turn to
page 310

READING

I John 4:7–10

Listen to the words of the first letter of John:

My dear friends, we must love each other. Love comes from God, and when we love each other, it shows that we have been given new life.

We are now God's children, and we know him. God is love, and anyone who doesn't love others has never known him. God showed his love for us when he sent his only Son into the world to give us life.

Real love isn't our love for God, but his love for us. God sent his Son to be the sacrifice by which our sins are forgiven.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Jesus said, "Love each other, as I have loved you." How are these words like the words of a mother to her children? Why is it important for Christians to love one another? How do I show my love for others?

CLOSING

Let us all say:
Christ, our light and our salvation!
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the sun that shines on everyone,
the day that knows no ending:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You give us this new day.
You give new life to the whole earth:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

You are the springtime of the universe
and the savior of the world:
Christ, our light and our salvation!

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out
the candle

TUESDAY PRAYER

May 30, 2000

INTRODUCTION

For many years, the weekdays before Ascension Day were called “Rogation *(ro-GAY-shun)* Days.” “Rogation” means “a request.” On these days people would walk in procession through the fields. They would sing their requests to God for a good growing season and healthy crops.

We, too, can bless our gardens and plants, and we can use flowers to make our homes and classrooms beautiful.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

▶ turn to page 310

READING

Matthew 28:16–20

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus’ eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee),* where Jesus had told them to meet him. They saw him and worshiped him, but some of them doubted.

Jesus came to them and said, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you.

“I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.”

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Jesus said, “Make all people my disciples.” Was this command given only to the apostles? Who should follow this command in the church today?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

O God, from the beginning,
 the earth has produced plants of every kind.
During this growing season,
 give us seeds and soil, sunshine and rain,
so that there may be food for us
 and for all your creatures.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

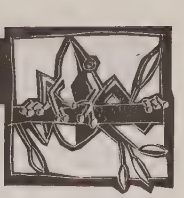
▶ sing “alleluia”

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out the candle

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

May 31, 2000



Reminder: Today please use the End of the Day Prayer on page 23.

INTRODUCTION

Mary was going to have a child. When she learned that her cousin Elizabeth was going to have a baby too, Mary went to visit her. Today we celebrate that visit.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to
page 310

READING

Luke 1:39–42, 45–48

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's *(zek-uh-RYE-uhz)* home, where she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby moved within her.

The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. Then in a loud voice she said to Mary: "God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise."

Mary said:
"With all my heart I praise the Lord,
  and I am glad because of God my Savior.
God cares for me, his humble servant.
From now on, all people will say
  God has blessed me."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What promise did God keep? Mary brought Jesus to Elizabeth and to her baby. Do I bring Jesus to the people who know me?

CLOSING

Mary, our mother,
  you sheltered Jesus in your own body.
You raised him with a mother's care
and followed him in faith.
Teach us all to celebrate God's saving love.

Let us all say:
Hail, Mary, full of grace,
  the Lord is with you!
Blessed are you among women,
  and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
  pray for us sinners
  now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Let us remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

June 1, 2000

▶ Reminder: On page 323 there is an End of the Day prayer for Ascension Day.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the fortieth day of the Easter season. It is a day of great joy!

We do not see Jesus with our eyes, but he is still with us. Or perhaps we see Jesus whenever we look at another person.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

▶ turn to page 310

READING

Acts 1:3–4, 5, 8–11

Listen to the words of the Acts of the Apostles:

For forty days after Jesus had suffered and died, he proved in many ways that he had been raised from death. He appeared to his apostles and spoke to them about God's kingdom.

While he was still with them, he said: "John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem *(juh-ROO-suh-lem),* in all Judea *(joo-DEE-uh),* in Samaria *(suh-MAIR-ee-uh),* and everywhere in the world." After Jesus had said this and while they were watching, he was taken up into a cloud. They could not see him, but as he went up, they kept looking up into the sky.

Suddenly two men dressed in white clothes were standing there beside them. They said, "Why are you standing here and looking up into the sky? Jesus has been taken to heaven. But he will come back in the same way that you have seen him go."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

We are told not to wait for visions from heaven. Are we ready to continue Jesus' work?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

Lord God,
make us joyful in the ascension
of your Son, Jesus.
May we follow him one day
into the new creation,
the kingdom of your glory.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out the candle

The Ascension of the Lord

END OF THE DAY PRAYER

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Christ is risen like the sun, alleluia!
ALL **The light of Christ shines**
over the whole world, alleluia!

▶ light a candle,
and then say:

LEADER Jesus is taken up to heaven!
May he come again to rule over us,
now and for ever.
ALL **Amen.**
LEADER Jesus sits at God's right hand!
May he watch over his people with love,
now and for ever.
ALL **Amen.**
LEADER Jesus gives us his gospel and his mission!
May he give us a share in his glory,
now and for ever.
ALL **Amen.**

LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May we live in the light of Christ.

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

▶ put out
the candle

FRIDAY PRAYER

June 2, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The fiftieth and final day of Eastertime is Pentecost. On that day we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to the band of followers that Jesus left behind.

The nine days before Pentecost are called the Pentecost novena *(no-VEE-nuh)*. The word "novena" means "nine days."

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

▶ turn to page 310

READING

John 16:1, 2–7

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am telling you this to keep you from being afraid. The time will come when people will kill you and think they are doing God a favor. They will do these things because they don't know either the Father or me. I am saying this to you now, so that when the time comes, you will remember what I have said.

"I was with you at the first, and so I didn't tell you these things. But now I am going back to the Father who sent me, and none of you asks me where I am going. You are very sad from hearing all of this. But I tell you that I am going to do what is best for you. That is why I am going away. The Holy Spirit cannot come to help you until I leave. But after I am gone, I will send the Spirit to you."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why might it be best for us that Jesus "went away"? How will the Spirit help us when hard times come?

CLOSING

Please respond to each petition:
"Come, Holy Spirit."

That the Spirit of wisdom may guide the leaders of our church, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of knowledge may open the scriptures to us, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of courage will strengthen those who are suffering, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

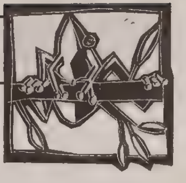
Our Father . . .

▶ sing "alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out the candle

WEEKLY PRAYER



With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, June 4, 2000

INTRODUCTION

If we get confused about the things that Jesus taught, we can always remember that they can be summed up in two laws: love God and love one another. When we think about all the things that Jesus did, we can remember that they too can be summed up in two goals. Jesus came to help us become one with God, and one with each other.

In today's reading we hear Jesus pray for the unity of his followers.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

▶ turn to
page 310

READING

John 17:11

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus prayed to God, "Holy Father, I am no longer in the world. I am coming to you, but my followers are still in the world. So keep them safe by the power of the name that you have given me. Then they will be one with each other, just as you and I are one."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why might Jesus be concerned about his followers? What is the "name" that God gave Jesus? How does that name protect us? How can the unity of Jesus' followers protect them?

CLOSING

Please respond to each petition:
"Come, Holy Spirit."

That the Spirit of knowledge may open the scriptures to us, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of courage will strengthen those who are suffering, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of awe may teach us to respect the earth, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out
the candle

MONDAY PRAYER

June 5, 2000

INTRODUCTION

This week we prepare for Pentecost, when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he told his followers not to be sad or afraid, but to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit would help them to grow in their understanding of all that Jesus had taught them. The Spirit would bring them unity and love and wisdom. This must have helped to put their minds at ease.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to
page 310

READING

John 16:12–14

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to John:

Jesus said to his disciples, "I have much more to say to you, but right now it would be more than you could understand. The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the truth.

"The Spirit doesn't speak on his own. He will tell you only what he has heard from me, and he will let you know what is going to happen. The Spirit will bring glory to me by taking my message and telling it to you."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Do I really expect the Holy Spirit to share God's truth with me? Do I ever pray for the truth?

CLOSING

Please respond to each petition:
"Come, Holy Spirit."

That the Spirit of understanding may do away with hatred, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of knowledge may teach us to live as Christians, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of courage may help people with addictions, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

TUESDAY PRAYER

June 6, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today we remember Saint Norbert. He became a great bishop, but he did not start out that way. He liked money and high living too much. One day, a thunderstorm frightened Norbert's horse. It threw him to the ground where he hit his head on a rock. When Norbert woke up he said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

From that moment, Norbert was a new man. The brush with death had taught him the true value of life, and he began again.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

➧ turn to page 310

READING

1 Corinthians 12:7–11

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others. Some of us can speak with wisdom, while others can speak with knowledge, but these gifts come from the same Spirit.

To others the Spirit has given great faith or the power to heal the sick or the power to work miracles. Some of us are prophets, and some of us recognize when God's Spirit is present.

Others can speak different kinds of languages, and still others can tell what these languages mean. But it is the Spirit who does all this and decides which gifts to give to each of us.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What kinds of gifts does the Spirit give people my age? How do my gifts help in building up the church?

CLOSING

Please respond to each petition:
"Come, Holy Spirit."

That the Spirit of counsel may protect mothers and their children, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of courage may lead us to new adventures, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of awe may bring people joy, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

➧ sing "alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

➧ put out the candle

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

June 7, 2000

Reminder: Eastertime ends on Sunday. The new Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer are on pages 336 to 338.

INTRODUCTION

On this day in the year 632, an Arab prophet died. His name was Mohammed *(mo-HAH-med)*. He preached surrender to the will of the one true God. In Arabic, the word "surrender" is "islam" *(iss-LAHM)*. There are over 900 million followers of Islam.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to
page 310

READING

Ephesians 1:17–20

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Brothers and sisters: I ask the glorious Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you his Spirit. The Spirit will make you wise and let you understand what it means to know God. My prayer is that light will flood your hearts and that you will understand the hope that was given to you when God chose you. Then you will discover the glorious blessings that will be yours together with all of God's people.

I want you to know about the great and mighty power that God has for us followers. It is the same wonderful power he used when he raised Christ from death and let him sit at his right side in heaven.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What gift does Paul want the Spirit to give us? What blessings has God given to this class?

CLOSING

Please respond to each petition:
"Come, Holy Spirit."

That the Spirit of wisdom may guide our studies, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of awe may teach us to care for our planet, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of peace may help us bring unity among our friends, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

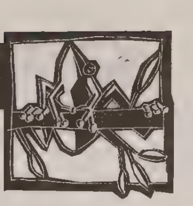
sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

THURSDAY PRAYER

June 8, 2000



Reminder: If next week is not the last week of school, prepare additional daily prayers. Suggestions are on pages 334 and 335.

INTRODUCTION

The school year is nearing its end. The green and sunny world is calling to us, and it is hard to keep our minds on spelling and math. It takes more of our energy now to sit quietly, to do our tasks carefully and to listen kindly to others. So let us be a little patient, and thankful, and we will find that the year will end even more joyfully than it began.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to page 310

READING

Romans 8:26–28, 31

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

In certain ways we are weak, but the Spirit is here to help us. For example, when we don't know what to pray for, the Spirit prays for us in ways that cannot be put into words.

All of our thoughts are known to God. He can understand what is in the mind of the Spirit, as the Spirit prays for God's people. We know that God is always at work for the good of everyone who loves him.

What can we say about all this? If God is on our side, can anyone be against us?

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What have I learned about prayer this year? Have I found some favorite ways to pray? Have I ever felt prayer within me that had no words?

CLOSING

Please respond to each petition:
"Come, Holy Spirit."

That the Spirit of prayer may open our hearts to God, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of compassion may open our hearts to our neighbors, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of joy may shape our living and our growing, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing "alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out the candle

FRIDAY PRAYER

June 9, 2000

Reminder: Ask the class to write down things that have happened this year that they are thankful for. Keep these papers. Use three of these ideas in the Closing each day next week. Talk to the teacher about this.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the first day of the Jewish Feast of Weeks, or Shavuot *(shah-voo-OAT)*, the feast held 50 days after Passover. On Sunday, Christians will celebrate Pentecost, the feast held 50 days after Easter. Once again, people all over the world are giving thanks to God for the gift of the Holy Law and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

turn to
page 310

READING

Joel 2:26, 28–29

Listen to the words of the prophet Joel:

The Lord said:
"My people, you will eat until you are satisfied.
Then you will praise me
for the wonderful things I have done.
Later, I will give my Spirit to everyone.
Your sons and your daughters will prophesy
(PRAH-fuh-sye).
Your old men will have dreams,
and your young men will see visions.
In those days I will even give my Spirit
to my servants,
both men and women."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What gifts did the prophet expect the Spirit of God to bring? Why are dreams and visions a good thing?

CLOSING

Please respond to each petition:
"Come, Holy Spirit."

That the Spirit of understanding may teach us to love one another, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of love may teach us to forgive one another, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of courage may strengthen us to do the right thing, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

put out
the candle

WEEKLY PRAYER

With the First Reading for Sunday, June 11, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Sunday, June 11, is Pentecost, a great day in our Christian year. On Pentecost we rejoice that Jesus keeps his promises. He sends the Holy Spirit to unify and strengthen his followers.

A PSALM FOR LATE EASTERTIME

▶ turn to
page 310

READING

Acts 2:1–4, 6–7, 11

Listen to the words of the Acts of the Apostles:

On the day of Pentecost all the Lord's followers were together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting. Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there. The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever languages the Spirit let them speak.

When they heard this noise, a crowd gathered. But they were surprised, because they were hearing everything in their own languages. They were excited and amazed, and said, "Don't all these who are speaking come from Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee)?* Yet we all hear them using our own languages to tell the wonderful things God has done"

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why are fire and wind good symbols of the Holy Spirit? What other stories in the Bible use these symbols?

CLOSING

Please respond to each petition:
"Come, Holy Spirit."

That the Spirit of awe may lead people to a life of prayer, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of peace may lead people to end war forever, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

That the Spirit of counsel may comfort those who are sorrowful, let us pray to the Lord:
Come, Holy Spirit.

Let us also remember these intentions:

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

▶ sing
"alleluia"

May we live in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

▶ put out
the candle

A Blessing before Summer Vacation

Shortly before their final dismissal of the school year, the students gather so that the teacher can bless each one of them.

TEACHER
May the Lord's face shine on us,
and may the Lord guide our feet
into the way of peace.
Blessed be the name of the Lord,
now and for ever.

ALL
Amen.

TEACHER
Let us put ourselves into the hands of the Lord,
and pray that God will bless us
and our families
during the wonderful months of summer.
May each of us help to make our home
a place of relaxation, joy, love,
peace and safety.
May we be generous and considerate,
not thinking only about ourselves
but helping others enjoy the blessings
of the summertime.

Please respond "Amen" as I bless each of you.

- the teacher goes to each student in turn,
places a hand on the student's head
or shoulder, and says:

N., go with God.

ALL
Amen.

- when these individual blessings
are completed, prayer continues:

TEACHER
Lord God,
this class has shared many things this year.
We were linked by common tasks
and time together.

Those ties are broken now.
We say good-bye and end our year.

Lord, bless each of these,
my students and friends,
especially those I will not see again.
Keep each of us in your care
during the coming summer
and throughout our lives.
Guide our steps and strengthen our hearts
until we gather once again in your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

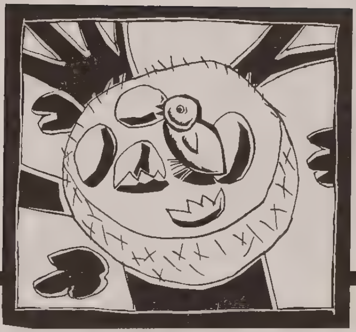
ALL
Amen.

TEACHER
Let us end this year as we began it,
with the sign of the cross.

ALL

- all make
the sign
of the cross

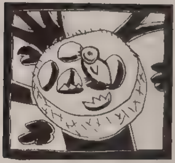
- sing a song of praise, such as
"God who stretched the spangled heavens"
(page 130 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) or "Shalom chaverim" (page 177)



EARLY SUMMER

Monday, June 12, to the End of the School Year

ORDINARY TIME EARLY SUMMER 2000



■ ABOUT THE SEASON

Eastertime has carried us into June this year, with its warm and sunny weather. Many spring flowers have finished blooming, leaving the rich, green world ready for the hot sun of summer. Vacation time cannot be far away!

LOOKING AHEAD

Our fifty days of Easter celebration have brought us almost to the end of the school year. This book provides a week of undated prayers for use during the last week of school. Use them whenever those last five days come for you. You can plan additional prayers for the days between June 11 and the last week of school if you need them. This is how you can do it:

Continue to use the *Psalm,* the *Meal Prayer* and the *End of the Day Prayer* for Early Summer. Let different students write *Introductions* to as many days as you need. Look up the saints and events that are listed below, or tell about important things happening in the news or in your own families.

You may choose your own *Readings* from the Bible or look back in this book to find readings you want to hear again. Use the *Reflection* printed on the same page as the reading you choose. Use the *Closing* on page 218, or any other that you like.

Remember that prayers for the last week of school are provided on pages 339 to 343. Weekly Prayer with a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, June 18, is on page 344.

▪ CALENDAR FOR THE REMAINDER OF JUNE:

Monday, June 12
Anne Frank, diary writer and martyr of the Holocaust.

Tuesday, June 13
Saint Anthony of Padua, Franciscan preacher who brought thousands back to the gospel. A wonder worker and patron of Italy.

Wednesday, June 14
Saint Basil, whose grandparents, parents, two brothers and one sister were canonized by the church.

Thursday, June 15
Amos, the shepherd who was drafted by God to be a prophet.

Friday, June 16
The death of the last dusky seaside sparrow, 1987; another species becomes extinct.

Sunday, June 18
Celebration of the Most Holy Trinity; see page 344.

Monday, June 19
Saint Romuald, who was such a wise teacher that people traveled from miles around to listen to him.

Tuesday, June 20
Summer solstice, a day to enjoy the sunshine and summer sports.

Wednesday, June 21
Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, patron saint of youth and of people suffering from AIDS.

Thursday, June 22
Bishop Paulinus and his wife, Therasia, models of holiness and hospitality.

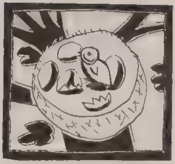
Friday, June 23
Midsummer Eve, a day to get ourselves ready for tomorrow's feast of the Birth of John the Baptist.

Sunday, June 25
Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, a day to thank God for the gift of the eucharist.

Monday, June 26
Dom Virgil Michel, a Benedictine monk who brought a love of liturgy to Minnesota. It spread from there to the whole country.

Tuesday, June 27
John Gerard, an underground priest who had many daring escapes in Elizabethan England.

Wednesday, June 28
Saint Irenaeus, a bishop who died for his faith about the year 203.



Thursday, June 29
Saints Peter and Paul, two great saints who helped form the early church.

Friday, June 30
The Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a day to celebrate the never-ending love of God.

■ PREPARATION FOR EARLY SUMMER

You may want to make copies of the new Psalm, Meal Prayer and End of the Day Prayer for Early Summer. These are found on pages 336, 337 and 338. If you are using *Blessed Be God!* you will find these prayers on pages 40 to 42.

▪ THE DAILY PRAYERS PLANNED FOR THE LAST WEEK OF SCHOOL ARE ON PAGES 339 TO 343. The Closing for these days is a litany of thanksgiving. During the second to last week of school, the class should be asked to list some of the good things that have happened during the school year so that these things can be included in this litany.

When we stop doing something, it is good to look back. We can see the fine things that we might not have noticed when they happened.

We have grown a lot. We have changed. We have learned many things. Now is the time to reflect on these things, appreciate them and say "thank you" for them. There may be many people who deserve our thanks.

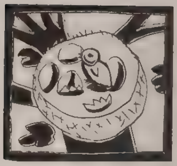
▪ THERE IS A BLESSING OF STUDENTS FOR THE TEACHER TO USE WHEN THE CLASS IS DISMISSED FOR THE LAST TIME. If you are going to exchange cards or have some other way of saying good-bye to each other, you may want to do all of this at the same time. Talk this over with the teacher. The Blessing before Summer Vacation is on page 332.

▪ SUGGESTED HYMNS: "Lord, you give the great commission" (page 156 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) is a good choice for early summer.

At this time of year you may prefer to sing favorite hymns rather than learn new ones. You might have a "hymn sing." Sing all the sacred songs you've learned since September. This gathering just for the joy of singing to the Lord is a wonderful ending of the year. Talk this over with the teacher.

The conclusion to the Meal Prayer for Early Summer can be sung. The melody is on page 173 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*. It is easy to learn and will be easier to remember during the summer if you know how to sing it.

A PSALM FOR EARLY SUMMER



Psalm 104:1–2, 13–15

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Lord, open my lips.
ALL **And my mouth will proclaim your praise.**
LEADER I will bless you, Lord my God!
ALL **You fill the world with awe.**
SIDE A You dress yourself in light,
in rich, majestic light.
You drench the hills
with rain from high heaven.
You nourish the earth
with what you create.
SIDE B You make grass grow for cattle,
make plants grow for people,
food to eat from the earth
and wine to warm the heart,
oil to glisten on faces
and bread for bodily strength.
LEADER I will bless you, Lord my God!
ALL **You fill the world with awe.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

▶ turn back to
Daily Prayer or Weekly Prayer
for today

EARLY SUMMER

MEAL PRAYER

MATH
SPANISH 1
KATIE

LEADER Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Let us pray.

Lord, the lover of life,
you feed the birds of the skies
and dress the lilies of the field.
We bless you for all your creatures
and for the food we are about to receive.
We humbly pray that in your goodness
you will provide
for our brothers and sisters
who are hungry.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
ALL **Amen.**

▶ the following words
can be sung to the melody for
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow":

Be present at our table, Lord.
Be here and everywhere adored.
Thy creatures bless and grant that we
May feast in Paradise with thee. Amen.

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

EARLY SUMMER

END OF THE DAY PRAYER

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Let us praise and glorify God
for the beauty of our summer world.
For sunshine that warms the day,
we pray:
ALL **Glory to you, O Lord.**
LEADER For rain that makes the grass sparkle,
we pray:
ALL **Glory to you, O Lord.**
LEADER For bright mornings and free afternoons,
we pray:
ALL **Glory to you, O Lord.**
LEADER For our good mother earth, we pray:
ALL **Glory to you, O Lord.**

▶ other praises
may be added

LEADER Lord our God, you create us out of the earth
and ask us to care for it.
Give us strength like your own,
and fill us with knowledge
that we may know the majesty of your works
and praise your holy name.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
ALL **Amen.**

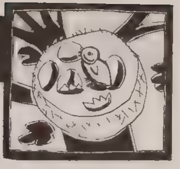
LEADER ▶ hold out one hand
toward everyone
in blessing, and say:

May the almighty and merciful God
bless and protect us:

ALL ▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

MONDAY PRAYER

Last Monday of the School Year



Reminder: For the Closing today, select three or more things for which you are thankful from the list you made last week.

INTRODUCTION

Most of us look forward to summer the way we look forward to heaven! We expect to spend time with our friends doing wonderful things. Maybe God renews our excitement for heaven by giving us a taste of it each summer.

The prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)* wrote about what God's kingdom would be like. In our readings this last week of the school year, we will hear about Isaiah's dreams.

A PSALM FOR EARLY SUMMER

turn to
page 336

READING

Isaiah 65:17, 18, 19–20

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

The Lord says this:
"I am creating new heavens and a new earth;
everything of the past will be forgotten.
Celebrate and be glad forever!
I will celebrate with Jerusalem
and all of its people;
there will be no more crying
or sorrow in that city.
No child will die in infancy;
everyone will live to a ripe old age."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What parts of the past year do I want to forget? What have we learned from the difficulties that we faced? What memories do I want to keep?

CLOSING

Please respond, "Thank you, Lord our God."

Generous God,
you have blessed us during this school year.
We thank you for these things:

For____,
let us thank the Lord:
Thank you, Lord our God.

repeat this pattern
two or more times

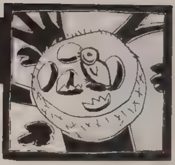
We thank you, Lord,
for the gift of your kingdom
and for the promise of summer.
Be with us each day.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

TUESDAY PRAYER



Last Tuesday of the School Year

Reminder: For the Closing today, select three or more things for which you are thankful from the list you made last week.

INTRODUCTION

When we think of summer's freedom, it makes us happy. Then we will not have to get up early or sit quietly in a classroom.

The prophet Isaiah *(eye-ZAY-uh)* lived in a time of war, bitterness and disorder. When he thought about happy times to come, he mentioned the harmony and peacefulness that the nation longed for.

A PSALM FOR EARLY SUMMER

turn to
page 336

READING

Isaiah 11:6–9

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

The LORD says this:
"Leopards will lie down with young goats,
and wolves will rest with lambs.
Calves and lions will eat together
and be cared for by little children.
Cows and bears will share the same pasture;
their young will rest side by side.
Lions and oxen will both eat straw.
Little children will play near snake holes.
They will stick their hands
into dens of poisonous snakes
and never be hurt.
Nothing harmful will take place
on the LORD's holy mountain."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Isaiah says that in God's kingdom all creatures are at peace. How can we work toward that day? Do I know any peacemakers?

CLOSING

Please respond, "Thank you, Lord our God."

Generous God,
you have blessed us during this school year.
We thank you for these things:

For ______________________________,
let us thank the Lord:
Thank you, Lord our God.

repeat this pattern
two or more times

We thank you, Lord,
for the gift of your kingdom
and for the promise of summer.
Be with us each day.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

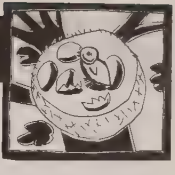
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

Last Wednesday of the School Year



Reminder: For the Closing today, select three or more things for which you are thankful from the list you made last week.

INTRODUCTION

In today's reading, Isaiah tells us that animals will share in the peace and freedom of God's kingdom. This is a good day to think about all kinds of animals, but especially our pets. They depend on our love and care. They reward us with their friendship. They do not care if our room is clean or if our socks don't match as long as we talk to them when we come home.

Today, let us thank God for all creatures, wild and tame, large and small. What would God's world be like without them?

A PSALM FOR EARLY SUMMER

turn to
page 336

READING

Isaiah 65:22, 24–25

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

The Lord says this:
"My chosen people will live
to be as old as trees,
and they will enjoy
what they have earned.
I will answer their prayers
before they finish praying.
Wolves and lambs will graze together;
lions and oxen will feed on straw.
Snakes will eat only dirt!
They won't bite or harm anyone
on my holy mountain."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What does it mean that "wolves and lambs will eat together" and "lions will eat straw"? What are my images for a world where every creature is safe and no one is a threat? What do I fear most? How do I fight that fear?

CLOSING

Please respond, "Thank you, Lord our God."

Generous God,
you have blessed us during this school year.
We thank you for these things:

For______________________________,
let us thank the Lord:
Thank you, Lord our God.

repeat this pattern
two or more times

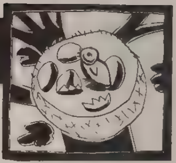
We thank you, Lord,
for the gift of your kingdom
and for the promise of summer.
Be with us each day.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia

THURSDAY PRAYER



Last Thursday of the School Year

Reminder: For the Closing today, select three or more things for which you are thankful from the list you made last week.

INTRODUCTION

As the school year draws to a close and the bright weather makes us eager to be outdoors, it is hard to believe that the church calls these days "Ordinary Time."

But of course we do not mean that this time is dull or boring. We are given the gift of life, and we are as bright and alive as God can make us. There is nothing ordinary about that!

A PSALM FOR EARLY SUMMER

turn to
page 336

READING

Isaiah 40:25–26, 29–31

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

The holy God asks,
  "Who compares with me?
    Is anyone my equal?"
  Look at the evening sky!
  Who created the stars?
  Who gave them each a name?
    Who leads them like an army?
  The Lord is so powerful
    that none of the stars are ever missing.
  The Lord gives strength
    to those who are weary.
  Even young people get tired,
    then stumble and fall.
  But those who trust the Lord
    will find new strength.

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Why do many people think of God when they look at the night sky? What other parts of nature make me think about God? Do we trust the Lord when we "stumble and fall"?

CLOSING

Please respond, "Thank you, Lord our God."

Generous God,
  you have blessed us during this school year.
We thank you for these things:

For____,
  let us thank the Lord:
Thank you, Lord our God.

repeat this pattern
two or more times

We thank you, Lord,
  for the gift of your kingdom
  and for the promise of summer.
Be with us each day.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

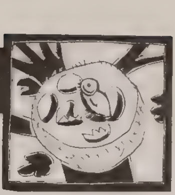
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

FRIDAY PRAYER

Last Friday of the School Year



Reminder: For the Closing today, select three or more things for which you are thankful from the list you made last week.

INTRODUCTION

The time is coming when we end one thing and begin another. We end our school year with thanks to God for all the year has brought us. And we begin our summer vacation with confidence that God is with us.

We will try to turn to God each day in prayer, remembering the forms of prayer that we have learned this year. Words and silence, songs and sorrows, thunderstorms and family meals—all things are meeting places with God, who loves us.

A PSALM FOR EARLY SUMMER

turn to
page 336

READING

Isaiah 12:4–5

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

When the LORD comes you will say,
"Our LORD, we are thankful,
and we worship only you.
We will tell the nations how glorious you are
and what you have done.
Because of your wonderful deeds
we will sing your praises
everywhere on earth."

The word of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What are my plans for the summer? What ways can we think of to continue to sing God's praises everywhere during the weeks of summertime?

CLOSING

Please respond, "Thank you, Lord our God."

Generous God,
you have blessed us during this school year.
We thank you for these things:

For____,
let us thank the Lord:
Thank you, Lord our God.

repeat this pattern
two or more times

We thank you, Lord,
for the gift of your kingdom
and for the promise of summer.
Be with us each day.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

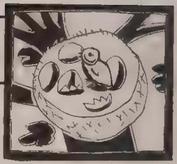
Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

WEEKLY PRAYER

With a Reading from the Gospel for Sunday, June 18, 2000



Reminder: The Psalm for Early Summer is found on page 40 in *Blessed Be God!*

INTRODUCTION

On Sunday, June 18, the church celebrates the Holy Trinity. God's life is a mystery too great for us to understand. We can only know what God has shown us through divine actions, divine revelation, and by being with us. We try to put what we know into words. Then we try to speak about God and to speak to God.

One of our oldest traditions has been to call God by the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These are the three persons of the Holy Trinity. And yet we know that there is only one God. This is hard to understand with the mind. But our hearts can take hold of it.

A PSALM FOR EARLY SUMMER

turn to
page 336

READING

Matthew 28:16–20

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee *(GAL-uh-lee),* where Jesus had told them to meet him. They saw him and worshiped him, but some of them doubted.

Jesus came to them and said, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you.

"I will be with you always, even until the end of the world."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

What are the words of baptism used by the church today? Whom does Jesus want in his church? How has Jesus kept his promise?

CLOSING

Let us remember these intentions:

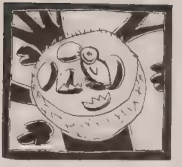
God of all nations and Creator of all peoples,
heal all that divides us.
Teach us to live together in peace.
As our world is one, so our future is one.
Give us one heart and one vision.
Make us one body in Christ Jesus,
filled with the joy of your Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

sing
"alleluia"

A Teacher's Farewell to the Classroom



The classroom is a sacred space, made so by the life and growth it has sheltered. When the last book is boxed and the last desk is scrubbed, take a few minutes to bless the classroom and to break your ties to it.

Use a class list and prepare some burning charcoal in a bowl for incense or use a bowl of holy water.

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

O God,
you call me to be a teacher,
sharing in children's wonder at your world
and at the power of your love.
The children are gone now,
and my job is finished.

be quiet
for a minute or two

Merciful God,
you know the hopes of August
and the reality of June.
You know my regret and contrition
for hopes not realized,
things not done,
needs not met,
errors, angers and injuries.

be quiet
for a minute or two

Redeeming God,
in your mercy, forgive and cleanse me.
Let this incense (holy water)
be a sign of release and purification.
Bless and renew this room.
Make it a safe and nurturing shelter
for students and teachers yet to come.

bless the room
with incense or holy water

Loving God,
I thank you for the bright spirits
of my students.
They have taught me much.
Surround them with safety and love.
Be with them on their journey.
Let the memory of the months spent in
this room always bring them joy.

read the list of your students,
commending each to God

Gracious God,
be forgiving of my failure!
Be glorified in my success!
Turn my face toward the future,
and renew my energy for what is yet to be.

"I have not yet reached my goal, Philippians 3:12
and I am not perfect.
But Christ has taken hold of me.
So I keep on running and struggling
to take hold of the prize."

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers for Sad Days

These are prayers for sad days and other times of trouble. Each one can be memorized and used when it is needed by students. To pray as a group, you can begin with the sign of the cross, then read one of the passages from scripture, and end with the prayer and sign of the cross.

It also can be good to sing a hymn. If someone is sick or has died, a fine song is "Blest are they" (page 112 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students*) or "Sing with all the saints in glory" (page 184 in the hymnal).*

A song for times of war or times of violence is "O God of love, O King of peace" (page 168 in the hymnal).

In times of trouble, a fitting song is "The Lord, the Lord, the Lord is my shepherd" (page 194 in the hymnal).

Psalm 18:28

O my God,
you brighten the darkness about me.

Psalm 27:13–14

I believe that I shall see the goodness
of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord.
Be strong, and let your heart take courage.
Wait for the Lord!

Psalm 28:6

Blessed be the Lord
who hears my cry.

Psalm 91:14–16

I deliver all who cling to me,
raise the ones who know my name,
answer those who call me,
stand with those in trouble.
These I rescue and honor,
satisfy with long life,
and show my power to save.

Isaiah 41:10

Do not fear, for I am with you.
Do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will hold you in my hand.

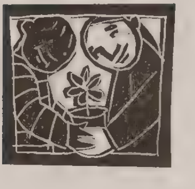
Prayer

Most holy and most merciful God,
strength of the weak,
rest for the weary,
comfort of the sorrowful,
our refuge in every time of need:
Grant us strength and protect us.
Support us in all dangers,
and carry us through all trials.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

Prayers for the Sick



Theotokos

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for all who are sick,
especially ___________________________.

Mother of Mercy, **pray for them.**
Mother of Light, **pray for them.**
Mother of the Savior, **pray for them.**
Mother of the Good Shepherd, **pray for them.**
Mother of the Church, **pray for them.**

Lord God, through the prayers of Mary,
our Mother,
bring your healing presence
to all who are sick, injured or troubled.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

You see our troubles, Lord;
you know our suffering.
In your mercy strengthen all the sick
especially ___________________________.
Ease their pain,
heal their bodies,
brighten their loneliness and
calm their fears.
Let them know you are always near,
their healer and redeemer.
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Isaiah 40:29–31

The Lord gives strength to those who are weary,
Even young people get tired,
then stumble and fall.
But those who trust the Lord
will find new strength.
They will be strong like eagles
soaring upward on wings;
they will walk and run without getting tired.

Psalm 10:12, 14

Arise, God, and act;
do not ignore the weak.
You observe our trouble and grief,
and at the right time
take things in hand.

Prayer of Saint Augustine *(adapted)*

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake,
or watch or weep tonight.
Tend your sick ones.
Rest your weary ones.
Bless your dying ones.
Soothe your suffering ones.
Pity your afflicted ones,
for your love's sake, O Lord Christ. **Amen.**

The Rosary

The rosary helps us think about events in God's plan of salvation. During this prayer, the Hail Mary is repeated many times. That way we invite the Blessed Mother to pray along with us.

A full rosary has 150 beads divided into sets of ten. The 150 beads remind us of the 150 psalms. As we pray each set of ten beads, or "decade," we think about one mystery in the plan of God. The fifteen mysteries of the rosary are listed on this page. Today, most rosaries have five decades.

The Joyful Mysteries

1. **The Annunciation.** Mary learns that she will become the mother of God.
2. **The Visitation.** Mary and Elizabeth visit and tell about God's wonders.
3. **The Nativity.** Jesus is born in a stable.
4. **The Presentation.** Mary and Joseph take the infant Jesus to the Temple, and they meet Simeon and Anna.
5. **The Finding of Jesus in the Temple.** Mary and Joseph lose Jesus, then find him teaching.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

1. **The Agony in the Garden.** Jesus prays about the suffering he will go through.
2. **The Scourging at the Pillar.** Soldiers whip Jesus.
3. **The Crowning with Thorns.** Soldiers mock Jesus.
4. **The Carrying of the Cross.** Jesus goes through the streets of Jerusalem to Calvary.
5. **The Crucifixion.** Jesus is crucified and dies on the cross.

The Glorious Mysteries

1. **The Resurrection.** God raises Jesus from death to life.
2. **The Ascension.** Jesus enters into divine glory.
3. **The Sending of the Holy Spirit.** The church is filled with God's courage and guidance.
4. **The Assumption of Mary.** She is the first to share in the resurrection of Jesus.
5. **The Coronation of Mary.** The Mother of God becomes queen of heaven.

Saying the Rosary in School

In school we usually say one decade. First the mystery is announced, then we say the Our Father, and then we say ten Hail Marys. We end with the Glory to the Father. Prayers for saying a decade are on the next page.

If you will say five decades of the rosary, introduce it with the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father and three Hail Marys. Then say five decades. When you are finished with five decades, say the Hail, Holy Queen (which is on the next page).

Because there are many Hail Marys, we should not say them as slowly as we would say a psalm. As we become used to saying the Hail Marys, we give our thoughts to the mystery. However, we cannot rush the words, or we will not be praying together or with dignity.

Praying a Decade of the Rosary

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER

While we say one decade of the rosary, we will think about ______________________.

choose one
of the mysteries
and read it to the class

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

ALL

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

LEADER

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you!
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

ALL

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

repeat the
Hail Mary
nine more times

LEADER

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:

ALL

As it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.

it is good to end the rosary with a song, such as "Magnificat" (page 158 in the *Hymnal for Catholic Students*) or "Immaculate Mary" (page 140 in the hymnal)

Hail, Holy Queen

this prayer is said
after praying five decades
of the rosary:

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope.

To you we cry, the children of Eve;
to you we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this land of exile.

Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us;
lead us home at last
and show us the blessed fruit
of your womb, Jesus:
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

all make
the sign
of the cross

A Blessing of Gifts

Gather around the food, clothing or other gifts you have collected. If this is not possible, place a portion of the gifts where they can be seen. Fill in the blank lines in the blessing with a description of the gifts.

To begin and end, sing a song of thanksgiving, such as "Now thank we all our God" (page 158 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students*) or "Let all things now living" (page 150 in the hymnal).*

all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Blessed be the name of the Lord,
now and for ever.

ALL
Amen.

READER Joel 2:20–22, 26
Listen to the words of the prophet Joel:

The LORD works wonders
and does great things.
So tell the soil to celebrate
and wild animals to stop being afraid.
Grasslands are green again;
fruit trees and fig trees
are loaded with fruit.
My people, you will eat until you are satisfied.
Then you will praise me
for the wonderful things I have done.

The word of the Lord.

LEADER
Loving God,
in your goodness you have given us
the food, clothing and shelter
that we need for life.
You have given us a family and friends
to care for us.
Now, because it is our turn to care for others,
we have gathered:

____

____.

extend your hand
toward the gifts
in blessing, and say:

Merciful God, bless these gifts
and bless the people who will receive them.
Do not let these gifts
be a cause of embarrassment
but a cause of joy and a sign of our respect.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

all make
the sign
of the cross

A Blessing of Food for Sharing

Place the basket or platter of food (fruit, cookies or anything simple) where it can be seen. After the ritual, the food will be shared by everyone as a simple meal of friendship.

To begin, sing a song of thanksgiving, such as "In the Lord I'll be ever thankful" (page 142 in the Hymnal for Catholic Students*) or "Now thank we all our God" (page 158 in the hymnal).*

➧ all make the sign
of the cross

LEADER
Blessed be the name of the Lord,
now and for ever.

ALL
Amen.

LEADER
Bless, O Lord, this fruit of your good earth
and the work of human hands.
It comes to us through your grace
and the loving care of many people.
As we eat this food,
make us joyful today.
For this food is a sign of your greatest gift:
your Son Jesus who redeems us in faith
and your Holy Spirit who unites us in hope.
Let this gathering be a taste of your kingdom,
where all things are transformed by love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL
Amen.

➧ all make the sign
of the cross

Subject Index

The introductions to most Daily or Weekly Prayers touch on the liturgical season or the day's scripture reading. These are not indexed here. The annual scheme of readings is outlined beginning on page x.

This index covers the church festivals, saints' days, national days and other observances that are the subjects of the introductions to Daily or Weekly Prayer. For example, Leap Year is the subject of the introduction to prayer for February 29. Note that days ranked as feasts and solemnities on the church's calendar are in **bold type.**

Agnes, St., January 21
Albert, St., November 14
All Saints, November 1
All Souls, November 2
Ambrose, St., December 7
Andrew Dung-Lac and companions, SS., November 24
Andrew Kim Taegon, St., September 20
Andrew, St., November 30
Angela Merici, St., January 27
Annunciation of the Lord, March 24
Ascension of the Lord, June 1
Ash Wednesday, March 8
Bakhita, Blessed Josephine, May 17
Baptism of the Lord, January 9
Birth of Mary, September 8
Blase, St., February 3
Body and Blood of Christ, June 25
Bowman, Thea, March 30
Brendan, St., May 16
Bruno, Giordano, February 17
Caedmon, St., February 9
Catechetical Sunday, September 19
Celestine, Pope, May 19
Chair of Peter, February 22
Christ the King, November 21
Clarke, Maura, December 2
Columbus, Christopher, October 11
Conversion of St. Paul, January 25
Cordula, St., October 22
Cornelius and Cyprian, SS., September 16
Day, Dorothy, November 8
Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, November 9
Donovan, Jean, December 2
Easter Octave, April 23 – 30
Easter Sunday, April 23
Elizabeth Ann Seton, St., January 4
Elizabeth of Hungary, St., November 17
Epiphany of the Lord, January 2, 6
Erasmus, Desiderius, October 27
Fabian, Pope, January 20
Ford, Ita, December 2
Frances of Rome, St., March 9
Francis de Sales, St., January 24
Francis of Assisi, St., October 4
Giovanni, Fra, February 18
Gregory the Great, St., September 3
Gregory VII, Pope, May 25
Halloween, October 29
Hanukkah, December 3
Hildegard of Bingen, St., September 17
Holy Cross, September 14
Holy Trinity, June 18
Id al Fit'r, January 7
Immaculate Conception of Mary, December 8
Isaac Jogues and John de Brébeuf, SS., October 19
Isidore and Maria, SS., May 15
Jerome, St., September 30
Jerome Emiliani, St., February 8
John Bosco, St., January 31
John Chrysostom, St., September 13
John Neumann, St., January 5
John of the Cross, St., December 14
Josaphat, St., November 12
Joseph, St., Husband of Mary, March 20
Joseph the Worker, May 1
Juan Diego, Blessed, December 9
Jubilee Year, November 29, January 3
Katherine Drexel, Blessed, March 3
Kazel, Dorothy, December 2
King, Martin Luther, Jr., January 16, 17
Las Posadas, December 16
Leap Year, February 29
Leo, St., November 10
Lucy, St., December 13
Luke, St., October 18
Mardi Gras, March 7
Martin de Porres, St., November 3
Martin of Tours, St., November 11
Matthew, St., September 21
Matthias, St., May 14
Mechthild of Magdeburg, St., October 8
Merton, Thomas, December 10
Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, archangels, September 29
Mohammed, June 7
Montanus, St., February 24
Mother's Day, May 12
Nicholas, St., December 6
Niemoeller, Martin, January 14
Norbert, St., June 6
O Antiphons, December 17–23
Our Lady of Sorrows, September 15
Our Lady of the Rosary, October 7
Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday, April 14, 16
Parks, Rosa, December 1
Passover, April 19
Patrick, St., March 17
Pentecost novena, June 2–10
Pentecost, June 11
Peter Claver, St., September 9
Philip and James, SS., May 3
Philip Neri, St., May 26
Polycarp, St., February 23
Presentation of the Lord, February 2
Presidents' Day, February 21
Purim, March 21
Ramadan, December 9
Rose Philippine Duchesne, St., November 18
Rosh Hashanah, September 10
Salmon, Ben, February 15
Scholastica, St., February 10
Shavuot, June 9
Simon and Jude, SS., October 28
Stanislaus of Poland, St., April 11
Sukkot, September 24
Talbot, Matt, May 22
Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre, April 10
Teresa of Jesus, St., October 15
Thanksgiving, November 25
Thérèse of the Child Jesus, St., October 1
Thomas Aquinas, St., January 28
Three Freezing Saints, May 11–13
Timothy and Titus, SS., January 26
Triduum, April 20 – 23
Trocmé, André, April 7
Turibius, St., March 23
Ursula, St., October 21
Valentine, St., February 14
Veterans Day, November 11
Vincent de Paul, St., September 27
Visit of Mary and Elizabeth, May 31
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 16, 18–25
Wenceslaus, St., September 28
Wesley, Charles and John, March 2
Wulfstan, St., January 19
Yom Hashoah, May 2
Yom Kippur, September 20

A Blessing for Birthdays

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

LEADER Loving God,
you created all the people of the world,
and you know each of us by name.
We thank you for N.,
who celebrates his/her birthday.
Bless him/her with your love and friendship
that he/she may grow in wisdom,
knowledge, and grace.
May he/she love his/her family always
and be ever faithful to his/her friends.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL **Amen.**

▶ those present may place
a hand on the head or shoulders
of the person being blessed

LEADER May God, in whose presence our ancestors walked,
bless you.

ALL **Amen.**

LEADER May God, who has been your shepherd from birth until now,
keep you.

ALL **Amen.**

LEADER May God, who saves you from all harm,
give you peace.

ALL **Amen.**

▶ all make
the sign
of the cross

adapted from *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*

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PAULIST
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